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August 23, 1882.

Vol. II.

Single Number.

PUBLISHED WEEKLY BY BEADLE AND ADAMS,
No. 98 WILLIAM STREET, NEW YORK.

Price,
Five Cents.

No. 37.

OLD TAR KNUCKLE AND HIS BOY CHUMS;

Or, The Monsters of the
Esquimaux Border.

BY ROGER STARBUCK.



KNUCKLE DEALT THE MONSTER A TREMENDOUS CRUSHING BLOW OVER THE BRIDGE OF THE NOSE.

Old Tar Knuckle AND HIS BOY CHUMS;

OR,

The Monsters of the Esquimaux
Border.

A Tale of Perilous Adventure on our New Coast.

BY ROGER STARBUCK.

CHAPTER I.

ASHORE AMONG THE ESQUIMAUX.

MIDNIGHT on the Kamtschata Sea. Off our wild, new coast of "Russian America," just north of Norton's Sound, a lurid glare shot up through the darkness.

It came from the chimney of the old whaler Beacon's tryworks, for the crew were now trying out a whale which had lately been captured.

Wild, uncouth-looking Kanakas, Manilla Islanders, Chinamen, etc., here mingled and worked side by side with Americans from New London and Nantucket.

Among them was Charley Nye—the son of the owner of the vessel—a youth of sixteen, with light-brown hair, blue eyes and a slender form, which seemed hardly fitted for the trials and exposures of a whaler's life.

Now he was turning the wheel of the machine, which, aboard a whaler, is used for cutting up the "horse pieces," or pieces of blubber. As fast as these were cut by the sharp knife of the machine, they would drop into a tub, from which, with an instrument having two sharp prongs, they were picked up by a harpooner standing in front of the blazing works, and tossed into the try-pot, where, heated by the fire underneath the pot, they would simmer and boil until all the oil they contained was extracted from them. Another man, provided with a long ladle, stood ready to dip up this oil from the pot, and pour it into a large funnel thrust into the bung-hole of a cask.

The perspiration streamed down Charley's face. He looked tired and worn, but he worked bravely on.

At sea, among the foremast hands of a ship of this kind, the democratic principle prevails.

"Workee lively there, Nye! Come! lookee sharp!" cried Yonkitt, an Esquimaux youth of nineteen, who, five years before, had left his native shores aboard a whaler, and had been a sailor ever since.

He had a round, fat face, little black eyes, and waddled like a duck when he walked. He was at present feeding the machine at which Charley toiled—that is to say, he slipped the pieces of blubber under the knife which was used to cut, or rather to mince, them.

"Come and 'spell' me, Yonkitt. I'll feed and you can turn," suggested Charley.

"Hey-yaw! all right!" answered Yonkitt.

"Come, keep her going dere! Nye! keep her going!" cried the harpooner, with the whaling-fork. He was a tall, sinewy native of New Zealand, with fierce, hawk-like eyes, and huge brass rings in his ears.

As Nye surrendered the wheel of the machine to Yonkitt, and hurried over the oil-spattered deck to take the place he had vacated, a dizziness came over him, his foot slipped, and he fell violently against the New Zealander, who was thus shoved against the heated try-works.

Uttering a fierce cry of rage, the quick-tempered native pushed the boy as he rose. This enraged Charley, who at once planted his fist between the fellow's eyes. A yell like a demon's escaped the Zealander. Seizing Nye by his waistband with one hand, by his collar with the other, he, by a single effort of strength, raised the boy on high, and was actually about to fling him headlong into the try-pot full of boiling oil, when he was suddenly tripped up, and the lad, pulled from his grasp by a powerful hand, was set upon his feet.

His rescuer was Tom Hasler—a strong young harpooner of eighteen—rough but kind youth who had constituted himself Nye's champion and chum, almost from the moment he first came aboard the whaler.

"You infernal blackskin!" cried Hasler, "don't you ever put your hands on him again?"

The native sprung, scowling, to his feet. He rushed at Tom, and a rough-and-tumble fight took place. Taking advantage of the New Zealander's long hair, Tom had his head under his arm, and was "punching" him vigorously when the second mate interfered, and put an end to the combat.

Charley again took his place at the mincing machine, but his brain seemed to spin round and round, and he was glad enough when, a few minutes later, the other watch was called, and the one he belonged to was thus enabled to go below.

The overworked boy was soon in a high fever.

For several days he remained in this state—days of great suspense and anxiety to the captain, especially as it was necessary to push on to the North Grounds.

Down in his cabin, the skipper reflected over the situation.

"Yes," he said to himself, "it may kill the boy, such as he is, if we take him further. I will therefore leave him ashore on the coast, until I return. Tom Hasler, Yonkitt, the Esquimaux, and Nick Knuckle—who, from his age and experience, will be useful company—shall be left with him. There are plenty of spare planks aboard. With these I will get the carpenter to knock up a comfortable little dwelling for the boy and his companions, on the coast. There he can rest and recruit his strength, and can also amuse himself by visiting the Esquimaux. In six or eight weeks, at the furthest, I will return for him. It is now the middle of August, and as winter in these high latitudes, begins before September is gone, I must be back here by the middle of October, at least."

He went on deck, and summoned his fourth mate, Nick Knuckle, to whom he disclosed his plan.

Nick Knuckle was an old seaman—a man of sixty-five. He had a little, round bullet head, ears out of all proportion, and a wide mouth, which stretching still wider when he smiled, had the appearance of dividing his face into two parts. His gray hair was twisted into a ball on each side of his temples and made fast with pieces of spun-yarn. He had very broad shoulders, narrow hips, was strong and muscular, and was almost as active as a young man.

"I think it'll do the youngster good, sir. It'll be a diversion for him and for others, too, for that matter," added Knuckle, smoothing both posteriors with his horny palms.

"It will only be for six or eight weeks, Knuckle, you know."

"Ay, ay, sir, and I ventur' to remark that provision enough to last us for that same time be left in the house," suggested Knuckle, smacking his lips.

"Of course."

"I would further ventur' to remark that a little grog be provided with the strengthenin' food."

"Ay, Knuckle, for the boy in case of sickness."

"For the boy and the rest of us, too."

"I thought you were a true Son of Temperance, Knuckle."

"I'm that same when I can't get any grog."

"Well, Knuckle, I will leave a little grog, but you must not drink more than one gill a day. I don't want you to get drunk."

"I could take a pint without gettin' drunk, for that matter," averred the old salt.

A few days later, by which time Nye had convalesced from his illness, the carpenter was sent ashore with his tools, and with some men to assist him in putting up a habitation for the little party to be left on the coast.

Timber enough for that purpose was taken to land, and in the course of a week a small but strong wooden building, about twelve feet high, and containing three rooms, was erected.

It was provided with a stove, fuel, provisions, blankets, beds, and many other useful things, among which were several lanterns, four guns, a revolver, etc., etc.

A spare whale-boat, with whaling gear, was also brought ashore, and Knuckle, discovering a hollow in a rock, which would make for it an excellent boat-house, had it at once safely stowed.

The dwelling, which was about twenty yards from the beach, was made of plank, with strips of tarred cloth nailed both on the inner and the outer sides of the boards. It contained a door and two small windows, while a stove-pipe, in lieu of a chimney, projected through a hole in the roof.

As the house stood near the base of a high rocky elevation, Knuckle, if necessary, could at any time put up on its summit a signal-staff, with which he was provided.

A good place being thus provided for their reception, Charley Nye and his companions were left ashore on this part of the coast of Russian America—their location being about fifty miles to the north of Norton's Sound.

Standing upon the rock, after they had bidden

their shipmates adieu, the little party saw the receding ship disappear in the mist among the floes on the water to the north-west of their position. They then entered their dwelling and proceeded to arrange things to their satisfaction. First a fire was made in the stove by old Knuckle, who put on a kettle of water for the purpose of preparing coffee. Three or four barrels of water had been conveyed to the building from the ship; when this supply should be exhausted, more could be obtained by melting snow.

The provisions, consisting of four hams, a barrel of salt junk, half a cask of sea biscuits, some canned tomatoes, a bag of salt, a jug of molasses, a few pounds of sugar, about twenty pounds of flour and a basket of potatoes, were placed in the back room, which was the smaller of the three. There, in a rude cupboard, the old sailor deposited a large bottle of rum which the captain had intrusted to his care.

"Honesty is honesty," he muttered. "I'll save that for the lad, in case of sickness. But, blast me, if I wouldn't like *some* of it—all of it, for that matter," he added, sympathetically.

After their first frugal dinner ashore, consisting of sea biscuits, canned tomatoes and coffee, Yonkitt went off to visit some of his countrymen, the Esquimaux.

Not long after the door opened and he entered, followed by about a dozen of these people. They were dressed in huge bearskin trowsers, sealskin boots of enormous size, and wore monstrous hats of dogskin. Their dusky yellowish faces shone as if greased, and their little black eyes twinkled like beads. Among them was a woman, who carried a baby with a face as round as a ball, in one side of her huge left boot. They all made a great clamor, every tongue going at a rapid rate.

"What do they say, Yonkitt?" inquired Knuckle.

"They ask for biscuit and molasses," was the reply.

"Tell them we can't spare any; but, belay there a bit, Yonkitt," ordered Knuckle, "I'll give some treacle to the little one in the lady's boot. Youngsters like that take wonderful to merlasses, and the way this babe's mouth is openin' and shuttin' and the way it's a-cryin' over the edge of that boot looks as if it knew what I was talkin' about."

The old tar procured a large tablespoonful of molasses, which he poured down the throat of the Esquimaux babe, which at once stopped crying, the wet little eyes rolling in its head with rapture as it tasted the sweet extract.

The Esquimaux mother looked grateful, and said something to Knuckle.

"She is thanking you," interpreted Yonkitt.

"Hi, yaw! perfectly welcome!" responded Knuckle, bowing to the woman, and twisting his mouth into a smile.

Again the female spoke.

"What does she say, Yonkitt?"

"She say you have very big mouth."

"She might have spared herself the trouble, for that matter," said Knuckle. As he spoke he pulled a small ball of wax from his pocket, and showed it to the baby. It was clear and transparent, and the little one held out its tiny hands toward it. Knuckle kept this wax for the strings he used to mend his shoes.

"Can't give it to you, but you may have it a minute to play with," he said to the child.

The latter took it, when, to the surprise of Knuckle, the Esquimaux mother seized it, transferred it to her mouth, and swallowed it at one gulp!

"Halloo! belay there!" cried the old tar, in dismay. "Why, blast my eyes! may your stomach be eternally waxed for swallowing such a pill as that. It's gone!—I'll never see it again!" added the old seaman, mournfully.

At that moment Charley Nye, who had raised the window, gave a shout.

CHAPTER II.

THE WHALE HUNT.

"THERE blows! there blows!" cried the boy—"a big bowhead whale, rolling along past the shore."

"Eels and flippers! What a hump on his back!" exclaimed Knuckle, as he and Tom Hasler sprang to the window.

"A living oil-cask!" declared Hasler, with admiration.

"There him go—eyes out to wind'ard—straight for ice!" chimed in Yonkitt, as the whale, "milling," (turning off), headed for a floe not far distant.

It was a clear, bright day, and the sunlight fairly flashed upon the back and the huge hump of the whale, as he leisurely scooped up the

water with his wrinkled head, which, sprinkled here and there with barnacles, looked as if it contained a hundred wicked eyes.

"Lively, mates!" cried Knuckle. "We mustn't let that chance slip us."

The Esquimaux had also seen the whale.

As the old tar spoke, not one of the visitors remained in the room.

"They are going for that whale, too!" declared To-

"Ay, ay!" asserted Knuckle; "but we must git ahead of 'em. Come, lads, we'll have to put lightnin' in the boat to beat them fellows!"

"How about our house?" asked Tom.

"We can lock it up."

Accordingly, the windows having been securely fastened and the door locked, Knuckle and his companions hurried to the hollow in the rock which served for a boat-house.

The boat was quickly launched.

Tom Hasler, as harpooner, pulled the bow-oar, Yonkitt the after-oar, and Nye the tub-oar, while Knuckle held the steering-oar—the one which is used to steer a whale boat. Of course, there being only four men, the crew was not a full one—which consists of six. Nevertheless, they worked well, and the light vessel sped swiftly on.

"Make her fly, lads! make her fly!" ordered old Knuckle, who stood with his legs astraddle in the stern-sheets. "Spring your backbones, and make her jump!"

"Hoo-law! boatee go streeake! hoo-law!" shouted Yonkitt, who pulled a magnificent stroke.

"We're ahead of them Esquimaux! they haven't waked up yet!" announced the mate, "and we'll be on top of the whale before they open their eyes, my lads, if you work sharp!"

Yonkitt laughed.

"Him Esquimaux very quick," he warned, as he looked off the larboard beam—"see!"

Following the direction of his glance, Knuckle, to his surprise and chagrin, beheld two long, light boats, so airy and transparent that they seemed rather to skim over, than to touch the water, and to blend with it.

Each of them contained four shaggy occupants, whose long paddles flashed like broad rays of light as they were plied with a rapidity which was truly marvelous. These light crafts had hitherto been hidden by a ridge of ice that extended outward from the shore.

Knuckle pulled a plug of tobacco from his pocket and bit off nearly a quarter of it.

He exhorted his crew in an animated manner as he rolled his cud from side to side. The boys did their best, but the Esquimaux kept gaining.

Meanwhile there was the whale, now not more than fifteen fathoms ahead, his huge brow still leisurely scooping the water, and his spout now and then gushing upward with a noise like the rush of steam from a pipe.

The Esquimaux boats by this time were so near that they could be plainly seen by the American whalers. Each craft was about ten feet long, made of the ribs of the walrus, with sealskin tightly fastened over them. They were sharply pointed at both ends, and as stated, were transparent. The paddles used were about five feet in length, and were neatly covered with skins.

In spite of every exertion of the boys, the Esquimaux were soon abreast of the boat.

"Now, lads, don't let 'em pass us!" cried the old salt.

But, even as he spoke, the sealskin boats noiselessly skimmed past, and darting on, were soon a full cable's length ahead.

All at once, however, they stopped, and their occupants good-naturedly permitted the Beacon's crew to pass them.

"Thank ye!" growled Knuckle, annoyed even by this concession on the part of the Esquimaux. "Thank ye, but if we had a full crew, I don't think you'd have needed to stop for us to pass you."

Yonkitt laughed, showing his white teeth.

"Esquimaux boat go like the wind."

"Now, Tom, stand up!" ordered Knuckle.

Hasler sprung to his feet. There was the whale not seven fathoms ahead.

"Give it to him!" yelled the old tar.

"Whiz-z! w-zt the barbed iron, as Tom hurled it, with unerring aim.

It struck the whale's barnacled hump, and was buried there to the very socket.

When first struck the whale usually sounds—that is to say dives into the depths under water. He may roll sideways, whisk about, or use his flukes for two or three seconds before going down, but never longer.

The monster now fastened to, gave one tre-

mendous sheer to larboard, threw up his flukes and brought them down sideways toward the boat, which, had they struck it, would have been shattered like an eggshell. But old Knuckle, the moment he perceived that Tom's iron was in the whale, had given the usual command—which means "to pack water."

"Starn! starn!"

Yonkitt, Tom, and Nye backed from the huge animal just in time.

The flukes barely grazing the light cedar planks, struck the water with a noise like a cannon-shot, enveloping the boat in a cloud of spray. Then, lifting his huge, uncouth head for an instant, down went the huge monster, diving into the depths of his ocean home.

Instantly, as is always the case at this time, the harpooner changed places with his officer. He sprung to the stern-sheets and seized the steering-oar, while Knuckle took his place in the bow.

Away went the line, humming as it ran around the logger-head, while the boat, her forward gunwale almost under water, shot through the sea with the speed of a whirlwind, dragged by the old ocean-king speeding along in the depths below.

Yonkitt threw water upon the smoking line to keep it from burning, while old Knuckle, Hasler and Nye gave three rousing cheers.

"Hoo! hoo! hoo! hoo! hoo!" yelled the Esquimaux in their boats astern.

Boong-ker! boong! boong! boong! boong-ker! boong! went the line, as it ran through the chocks of the boat.

"Good-by!" shouted Knuckle, waving his hat to the Esquimaux. "Your skin-boats are of no account now, my lads!"

"Hock-e-law! hi-yaw-hoo!" was borne back from the wild Northmen, as they paddled toward the fast boat.

"There she rips! there she streaks it!" said Tom, as the boat redoubled her speed.

"Ay, ay," said old Knuckle, "he's a r'al greaser, that whale, and knows what he's about!"

As Knuckle spoke, he selected several of the best lances he could find, and holding one carelessly, looked about him.

Directly ahead, a mile off, were masses of ice—some of them twenty feet in height. Straight toward them the boat was heading, but the old tar hoped that the whale would come up before reaching them.

Nearer to the floe drew the boat every moment. Should it be dragged into the ice the peril would be extreme. To strike one of those bergs at a much less rate of speed than the present must result in its destruction.

The old fourth mate looked at Nye.

"Lad," said he, "I was charged to take good care of you. If we get much nearer to the ice, I'll have to cut from the whale."

Charley's eyes flashed.

"No! no!" he protested; "don't cut on my account! Hold on, I say, to the whale!"

Knuckle smiled. His mouth never before looked so wide.

"Ay, I'm for holding on, too!" declared Tom, "even to the death."

"To the death, say I, too, and afterwards, for that matter!" cried Knuckle.

At that moment the speed of the boat began to slacken, indicating that the whale was preparing to come up.

"Haul line!" shouted the old mate a few minutes later, as the rope ceased to run.

The boys pulled with a will, and soon had the line taut, Yonkitt having carefully coiled the slack of it in the tub.

The boat was within twenty feet of the ice-floe, when a sort of hollow, roaring sound was heard, followed by a buzzing noise like that of a revolving saw.

All at once the water, not ten fathoms ahead, was seen to go round and round in a circle of little eddies.

"Stand by!" shouted the fourth mate.

As he spoke, the water parted in the center of the little whirlpool, and up rose the Leviathan, his huge body shooting half its length out of the sea, with the line which was attached to the iron sticking in the hump, flying into the air.

"Pull ahead!" cried Knuckle, as he balanced his long lance in his right hand.

The crew seized oars and obeyed.

As soon as he was within darting distance, Knuckle hurled his weapon, which, with unerring precision, was buried in the body of the sea monster.

The moment he felt the lance, the monster gave on a tremendous, sidelong sheer toward the boat, and raising his flukes, sent them right and

left, beating the sea with the rapidity of a windmill.

Slap! bang! ker-boong! crash! ker-whish! went the huge tail, fanning the air about the heads of the crew and scattering the spray around them in clouds.

"Starn! starn!" roared old Knuckle, as he buried his lance again and again in the writhing, bounding body of the whale.

"Hoo-law! hoo-hoo-hoo!" screamed Yonkitt.

Whiz-z-z! whiz-z-z! whisk! went the flying line, the boys dodging the bights as they circled about their ears.

"Pull ahead!" yelled the mate.

The oarsmen obeyed, and now the old tar was in the thick of the fight. With a thump the boat's bow struck the side of the Leviathan, and Knuckle with his lance commenced to churn the huge animal's body. The hissing, blinding spray, the thunder of the falling flukes, the roar of the boiling waters, the shouts of Yonkitt, the cheers of Hasler and Nye, the loud rushing of the whale-spout, and, not far astern, the yells of the Esquimaux, who were paddling up "like mad," created a most unearthly din.

Through it all, Knuckle remained cool and steady, using his lance with deadly precision and endeavoring to reach the *life spot*, which is seldom done, owing to the rapidity of the whale's movements. The keen eye of the old tar noting every move of his adversary, he suddenly bawled out:

"STARN!" in a voice that made his hearers jump.

A sudden spasm had seemed to convulse the gigantic barnacled body. The huge head was whirled round, and with one tremendous effort the whale sprung the full length of his form from the sea, and thus, for an instant, hung suspended, with outstretched fins, directly over the boat!

Well was it that Knuckle had given the order to "starn" in time! Down came the enormous living mass, just missing the boat, and striking the sea with the din of twenty thunderbolts!

"Full ahead!" roared Knuckle again, and again his lance churned the whale.

But the latter now, with plunging bounds, made directly for the ice, and reaching it, whisked about among the bergs, staining them with his blood. Again came the order to pull ahead, and soon the planks of the boat grated through the ice. As Knuckle plied his lance, the infuriated monster, whirling round like lightning, dashed forward with his huge, barnacled head directed toward the boat.

"Starn!" howled Knuckle, and the boys endeavored to obey.

But the ice was in the way, and jammed against one of the bergs, with other masses all around it, the little craft could not be worked, and thus, at last, it was at the mercy of the King of the Sea.

Cool and composed, Knuckle still plunged his lance into the enemy. But the monstrous head came surging on like a great moving rock, its barnacles gleaming like hundreds of evil eyes, while, still scattered by the limber flukes, the half-blinding spray whirled between it and the imperiled crew.

"It's all up with us, lads!" cried the old seaman as he continued to ply his lance, "we're cornered now!"

Caught in a bight of the berg, none of the occupants of the craft could save themselves by jumping out of their vessel, for the ice, a steep wall, hemmed them in on three sides.

"Hoo-aw!" shrieked Yonkitt. "We no can git away!"

"We're as good as dead, for that matter!" confessed Knuckle, mournfully.

In fact the enormous head of the whale, coming swiftly on, now not seven fathoms distant, must dash the boat to fragments the moment it should strike it, and kill every one of the crew!

CHAPTER III.

A MYSTERY.

WHILE the Beacon's boat's crew were thus anticipating a terrible death, two shafts of light appeared to dart swiftly through a channel between a couple of ice-bergs to the right of the whale.

These were nothing more nor less than the two transparent sealskin boats of the Esquimaux, who by this time had succeeded in reaching the floe.

One glance showed them the perilous situation of the party in the ice-cove.

Yonkitt gave a cry of joy on seeing his countrymen, but Knuckle shook his head.

"Too far off to help us!" he averred.

Such really appeared to be the case, for the

Esquimaux were fully eleven fathoms from the whale.

With wonderful celerity they paddled several fathoms nearer, and then up rose one of these men of the North with his long spear or harpoon made of wood or bone, tipped with copper, balanced in his right hand, ready for darting. He was fully eight fathoms from the whale, and Knuckle shrugged his shoulders hopelessly, feeling confident that the man could not strike his fish at so great a distance, for he had never seen a whaler who could do so at a longer range than seven fathoms, which is considered a wonderful dart.

But the Esquimaux, with quiet confidence drawing back his arm, suddenly sent the weapon whistling on its way, and to the surprise of Knuckle, he saw it strike the whale's body and sink to the depth of several feet!

"Eels and flippers! what a dart!" he cried in astonishment.

"I never saw anything like it!" added Hasler.

It was in fact a wonderful throw for a harpooner, but the wild sons of these northern climes have been known to hurl their barbed weapons even further still, and with precision and effect at that!

This skillful dart saved the lives of Knuckle and his companions, for the instant the whale felt the prick of this new weapon, he dove down into the depths, whirling his flukes almost into Knuckle's eyes as he went. To cut from the monster was with the old tar the work of an instant, as a knife is always kept ready in the bow for that purpose.

One stroke of the keen blade severed the line, and the boat was free from the whale. Had the mate held on to his whale, instead of cutting the boat, in its present position among the floes, would have been crushed, there being no room for it to run.

The sealskin boat of the Esquimaux, on the contrary, being in a channel near the edge of the floe, was safe enough, for the whale, taking a direction away from the ice, drew the light craft out into the open sea.

The whale-line of the Esquimaux, made of the hide of the walrus, was about a quarter of an inch thick, and was very tough. The monster now struck did not take much of it ere he came up to the surface. The moment he rose, Knuckle was there to assist in killing him with his lance, which had already partly done its work.

Hauling in the slack of their dripping line, the Esquimaux, who were fast to the Leviathan, were soon darting their copper-pointed lances into the whale with marvelous rapidity. The graceful and easy manner with which these light boats were whirled here and there, to escape the flukes and the head of the monster as their occupants charged him with their weapons, was truly wonderful!

At last the whale showed a blood-red spout, and as this became thicker and lower, he swam around in a circle, which kept narrowing as his motions became feeble, and finally, with one farewell upward movement of the head and flukes, he rolled over on his side and gave up his mighty breath!

"Well," said Knuckle, as he took a fresh bite from his plug of tobacco, and smilingly straddled his legs, "the old king has been obligin' enough to kick at last. Much obliged to ye, Skeemos, or your kindness in saving our lives and helpin' us take our whale."

The Esquimaux told Yonkitt that for a little celupi (tobacco) they would help tow the prize to the shore, which was now about a league distant.

The monster was fastened to, and the towing was commenced. It was very slow work for so small a party of men. Before the whale was towed half-way to land, the wind came on to blow almost a gale, and many icebergs were driven between the toilers and the coast. Night, too, was closing round the party, and the Esquimaux refused to work longer. Charley Nye was thoroughly exhausted.

"Boys," said Knuckle, "we'll have to give up for the present."

"And lose the whale?" inquired Hasler.

"No! We'll make him fast to one of these bergs, and put a signal on top of the berg. The berg won't drift if we fasten a line to it and make 't other end fast to the shore. That's the best we can do, as we haven't anchors for anchorin' our fish."

The gale by this time having subsided, and the coast being now not further off than two hundred yards, this plan, which by whalers is often adopted, under similar circumstances, was the one chosen by our party.

The whale was secured with strong ropes to the iceberg, one part of the whaling-line was made fast round the frozen mass, and Tom Hasler and Nye having been left there, Knuckle and Yonkitt commenced to pull shoreward. Hasler "paying out" the coil of line which had been placed on the berg for that purpose, as the boat receded.

The berg being occupied by the two boys, was about fifty feet in diameter, with a column rising up from one side, and it was to this that the line had been made fast. Nye helped Tom to keep the rope clear as it was paid out.

Not long after, the boat reached the shore, and the other end of the line was secured to a rock. By this time darkness had closed round the floe.

"Why doesn't the boat come for us?" demanded Charley.

"It is a little strange," admitted Tom.

He had lighted one of the boat-lanterns which had been left with him, and he now waved it about his head.

Meanwhile Charley's teeth were chattering with the cold. In fact both boys were chilled through, besides being tired and hungry.

"Halloo there! halloo!" shouted Tom, as he continued to wave the lantern! "Come and take us off!"

There was no response. The boys peered through the gloom, but still they could see no sign of the boat.

Tom took off his pea-jacket, and insisted that Charley should put it on. The younger lad objected, but Tom would take no denial.

Just as young Nye put on the jacket, a shrill, piercing, horrible cry was heard from the direction of the shore!

"What can that be?" asked Charley, as the two boys exchanged glances of dismay!

"God only knows," answered Tom. "It was not that of any animal. It was a human cry."

"Can it be that the Esquimaux have attacked Knuckle?"

Tom started, and for an instant turned pale.

"No," he said, after a moment's thought, "I don't think they would do that. They are great thieves, but they would hardly go so far."

The boys listened, but they did not again hear the cry.

All at once they saw a flash of light ashore, followed by the sharp report of a pistol.

"That was Knuckle's pistol," declared Nye.

"It cannot be that it is a signal to us?"

"Hark!" admonished Nye, suddenly laying a hand on his friend's arm.

A hollow, gurgling, roaring noise was heard, like that of a herd of bulls.

A minute later, dark slimy forms shining in the lantern's glare came swarming out of the water upon the berg occupied by the young sailors.

"Sea-elephants!" exclaimed Tom. "What can have sent so many of them here all at once?"

The uncouth-looking creatures crawled upon the berg in every direction. It was soon fairly black with them.

Each of these animals was about ten feet in length, with a long, projecting snout and small, singular-looking eyes. The two lads were completely surrounded by them—hemmed in on all sides. The monsters did not attack them, but all, thrusting their snouts forward, set up a most unearthly bellowing.

And kept it up for several minutes, until, with a farewell upward glance of their little goblin-like eyes in the sides of their heads, they plunged into the sea and disappeared in the gloom beyond.

"It seems to me that the berg moves," said Charley; "it seems to go forward."

With a bound Tom reached the rope fastened to the base of the column. He seized it and began to pull upon it.

A cry of dismay escaped him, for the rope came loosely in!

"We are adrift!" he shouted.

"Are you sure?" gasped Charley, as Tom continued to pull on the rope.

"Ay, sure enough; you can see for yourself."

"What could have parted the rope? The elephants with their teeth?"

"I hardly think so."

He finally hauled in all of the rope. He held the two ends by the lantern which he had set on the ice.

"See, Charley, it is a clean cut. That has been done with a knife!"

"And how is this?" demanded Nye. "Here is the water washing over the place where we stand!"

"It must be a wave," gasped Tom, a deadly paleness overspreading his face.

"No, you can see the water is almost smooth."

Tom hurried to the side of the berg on which the whale was secured. He held up the lantern, but no sign of the dead monster was discovered. It had been fastened by means of a strong rope, one end of which was passed through a hole cut in the thick ice. The rope was not now to be seen; the edge of the berg had tipped up and sunk several feet under water.

"What does it mean?" said Charley. "Have we lost the whale?"

"Worse than that! The whale is sinking and is dragging the berg down with it!"

"Can we not cut from the whale?"

"No. Had we known sooner it was sinking, we might have done so, but the rope is too far under now."

"Then we are lost!"

"Charley, I fear it is true!"

The two boys clasped each other's hands silently and stood for some time exchanging glances.

Meanwhile the whale gradually settling, drew the berg down more and more in a slanting position.

Tom and the boys were obliged to cling to the icy column, nearly to the summit of which they had climbed.

The water had by this time covered the lower half of the berg.

The huge mass of the whale's body sunk slowly but surely toward the bottom.

This sinking of the whale after he is struck is a common occurrence.

Sometimes it happens immediately after death, and sometimes several hours later.

The situation of the lads was perilous in the extreme. Chilled as they already were they could not keep up long in the cold water, when the berg should at last go down from under them.

Lower—lower every moment!

Tom, who had brought up the lantern with him, waved it wildly about his head with his disengaged arm. But he had little hope now that the signal would be heeded.

Already the water was rushing with a gurgling roar into the hollows of the icy column to which the young sailors clung.

"I can hold on no longer!" gasped Charley.

"My hands are benumbed!"

Tom flung his lantern into the sea, and seized the speaker by the jacket to keep him in his place.

"Hold on, for God's sake! Don't let go till the berg leaves us!"

As he spoke the berg plunged sidelong almost beneath the surface. In another moment it must go under!

"Hoo-law!" exclaimed a shrill voice. "Comee here in time! Droeep down quick! Me catch in boat!"

It was Yonkitt who spoke.

The boys letting go their hold of the icy column, as it was going beneath the surface, dropped into the light skin boat, which Yonkitt had brought to their rescue.

Nearly at the same moment the waters closed over the iceberg they had just left, as it was drawn slowly down into the depths by the sinking whale.

CHAPTER IV.

A PERILOUS COMBAT.

CHILLED and half frozen as they were, the boys were glad to assist Yonkitt in paddling the sealskin canoe toward the coast.

In response to the eager inquiries of his two companions as to what had happened ashore to delay their being taken from the iceberg, the Esquimaux explained as follows:

As soon as the whale-boat and the two canoes had gained the beach, Knuckle fastened the end of the line to a rock. He and Yonkitt were then about to enter the boat to go for the boys, when they heard a gurgling sort of roar among the rocks, and, in the dim light, they saw dark forms rushing toward the water. They could not distinguish more than the outlines of these figures, but it was evident that a number of small sea-elephants were being pursued by several huge sea-lions.

At the same moment they heard a terrible cry not far off; then they caught a glimpse of a sea-lion as it went past them with something in its mouth,

"Ay, the cry you speak of, was what Tom and I heard while on the iceberg!" said Nye.

"Yes," said Tom, "and it was their being pursued by sea-lions that had frightened the elephants and caused them to swarm upon the iceberg."

Yonkitt's eyes gleamed wildly through the darkness.

"What you t'ink made them cry? What you t'ink?" he exclaimed.

"We did not know; we thought some one was hurt, and—"

"No," interrupted Yonkitt, "cry came from Esquimaux squaw—from mudder of dat baby Knuckle give der molass to, in wooden house."

The speaker went on to explain that while the woman with her child, was approaching the shore to meet her husband, who was one of the men in the canoes that had just come to land, she had crossed the path of a huge sea-lion, which was making for the water.

It is perilous to get in the way of one of these monsters at such a time.

Before the woman could step aside, the creature was upon her, knocking her down, and making a snap at her with its fangs. She rolled over to avoid it; then she heard a cry from the babe and to her horror, saw the lion snatch up the child, and make off with it—in his mouth! Then it was that she uttered the terrible cry which was heard.

Springing up, she started in pursuit of the beast, and soon meeting Knuckle and his companions, she described what had happened.

The lion with his prey had disappeared among the rocks. A long but useless search was made for him. Once Knuckle thought he saw him, and fired his pistol, but he soon discovered his mistake, the thing aimed at proving to be only a common seal near the water. "At last," continued Yonkitt, "Knuckle tell me better go for boys on iceberg, while he stay and still help Esquimaux hunt for lion wid baby."

Nye shuddered.

"The poor thing is probably devoured by this time," he said.

"Don't know; hope not," answered Yonkitt.

"And now me tell you how line fast to berg on which you were come out. Squaw lookin' for baby, find line in her way. She half crazy—she not stop to ask question; she cut line quickee wid her knife."

Not long after, the canoe gained the beach.

The three occupants could see the outlines of the Esquimaux, and could hear their voices, as they searched in vain for the lost child.

Finally the gleam of torches, which had been brought from the settlement, lighted the gloom, and the form of the poor mother, as she ran hither and thither, peering among the rocks and rending the air with cries of anguish, was a sad spectacle to behold.

At last old Knuckle, panting with his exertions, appeared before the boys.

"Ay, ay," he said, "it's too bad. I'm afeared the youngster will never be found. I'm goin' to help 'em continue the s'arch in the morning."

The sailors, keeping along the coast in the whale-boat, soon reached the landing-place, near the hollow rock opposite the little dwelling. Having put the boat in its place, they entered the building and lighted a lamp.

"Halloo!" cried Knuckle, "what does this mean?"

In fact, one of the windows was open—or rather, it had been broken in by some heavy instrument!

"Ay, what can it mean?" echoed Hasler.

"There has been a robbery!" declared the old sailor. "Ay, blast my eyes! this is no better than a civilized country, arter all!"

Taking the light, he entered the room where the provisions were kept. Two of the hams and all of the flour were gone. The jug of molasses was also missing.

"Who are the thieves?—that's the question!" demanded Nye.

"It's plain enough to be seen—the Skeemos, of course," was Knuckle's response.

"You not sure," demurred Yonkitt.

"Who else could have done it?"

"Don't know; but don't think Esquimaux take provision."

"Well," said the old tar, "we'll have to look into this thing. I'll have to speak to your people about it. By the everlastin' codfish!" added Knuckle, suddenly; "I hope they haven't meddled with the rum!"

Running to the cupboard, he was glad to perceive that the liquor remained unmolested, behind the coil of rigging where he had placed it.

He prepared some hot rum, and gave a little to Nye.

"That'll do you good arter your hardship," he said to Charley. "In fact, it would do us all good for that matter!" added Knuckle wistfully.

"Help yourself, then," ordered Nye, "and give some to Youkitt and Hasler."

"No," demurred the old tar. "Honesty is honesty, and I must keep my word. I promised the captain I would keep this as medicine for you."

Nye could not change his resolution; the old tar put away the bottle, and set about preparing supper.

Next morning, after a refreshing sleep, the party rose early.

"I'm goin' to help hunt for the Esquimaux baby," announced Knuckle. "You may go along if you like, lads. You, Yonkitt, must stay and watch the house."

"Ay, ay, sir," answered Yonkitt, a little sulinely.

It was evident he did not like the suspicion Knuckle expressed the night before about his people.

"Are you going to speak to the Esquimaux about the robbery?" inquired Hasler, as the trio walked toward the settlement.

"Not till arter the babe is found," said the mate—"leastways, not until the hunt for it is given up. In t'other words," added Knuckle, by way of comparison, "when the strand is ready to snap, it's best to slack up, instead of givin' an extra twist with the marlinspike."

A large party of Esquimaux were seen ahead, already searching among the rocks along the coast.

The mother of the lost child was there, and also her daughter—an Esquimaux girl of fifteen, whose name was Ingluk. With her dark eyes and smooth cheeks, this girl was rather pretty, in spite of her swarthy skin and clumsy attire.

Knuckle and his two companions joined the natives in the search. The old tar, and each of the boys, carried a strong club. During the hunt, they found themselves on the shores of a small bay, with a line of rocks extending, in broken masses, about a hundred yards from the water.

They perceived that these rocks contained many hollows, in front of which were several packs of seals. The uncouth-looking monsters were of a brown and white color, and each pack was closely huddled together.

The moment the sailors appeared the animals raised their heads, and uttered discordant cries something between the barking of a dog and the howling of wolf.

Two huge, grim looking sea-lions sat like sentries a few yards away in front of the pack. They showed their fangs, and sent forth deep, guttural roars, while their eyes blazed like balls of fire.

The bodies of the lions were full fifteen feet long, they had thick manes, long bristles stood out from under their flat noses, their heads were broad and massive, and their eyes were round, bright and fierce.

"We haven't looked in those hollows yet," and Knuckle pointed toward the rocks.

"No," responded young Nye. "We will have to pass through the pack of seals to reach those rocks." As he spoke some of the Esquimaux, who had heard the noise made by the seals, joined the sailors.

On seeing the animals, they advanced toward them, their bone lances held ready for darting. They moved slowly and cautiously, Knuckle and the two boys keeping up with them. Each of the lads, imitating the old tar's example, held ready the club with which he was provided.

The party were within ten feet of the animals when, all at once, one of the packs headed by the lions rushed toward them, making for the water.

To oppose the progress of these rushing, leaping monsters was impossible, and the Esquimaux at once resorted to the manner which is always adopted by sealers under similar circumstances.

Throwing themselves down flat, they lay motionless, in which position the seals passed over, without offering to harm them. Had they remained upright, the creatures would have torn them to pieces with their fangs.

Knuckle had motioned to the boys to imitate the natives' example. The old tar and his young companions lay flat and still, but the lads could hardly repress a shudder as the slimy creatures sprung over them.

The moment the animals had passed and taken to the water, the Esquimaux rose. Assisted by Knuckle and the boys, they attacked such of the seals as remained, the sailors using their clubs and the natives their lances.

One blow with the club over the bridge of the nose is sufficient to kill a seal.

"They'll give us some skins to save for Captain Stone," said Knuckle, as he pointed at the animals he had killed. Those being fur-seals,

were more valuable than the others, which were hair seals.

Ingluk, the Esquimaux girl, who had closely followed her people, and who had kept near young Nye, while he struck down the seals, now darted into one of the caves in the rocks.

"Come, lads, let's follow," said Knuckle, "and see if we can find that poor babe, or, at any rate, what's left of it."

The three entered the cave, and advancing, looked carefully around them.

Nye, seeing a narrow, rocky passage, leading from the main cave, turned off in this direction, thus separating from his companions, who passed on.

He had advanced about ten paces when he found himself in another rocky chamber about seven feet high and ten feet broad, dimly lighted by crevices in the roof above.

He had crossed to the opposite side of this cavern, when he was startled by a deep, guttural roar. Then he noticed what had at first escaped his attention—the huge body, massive hairy head, and fierce, gleaming eyes of a sea-lion near one of the rocky walls of this retreat. The monster faced an alcove, in which, to the boy's dismay, he could dimly descry the form of Ingluk, who, now being cornered by the lion so that she could not pass it, was certainly in a position of great peril. Having no arms with her—not even a knife or a club, she could do nothing to defend herself against the savage beast, which, with elevated neck and fangs revealed, was evidently about to spring upon her.

Hitherto she had uttered no cry, but the moment she perceived that Charley noticed her she shook her head, said something in a low voice, and motioned toward the rocky passage, probably as an intimation to him not to attempt her rescue without the assistance of others.

But Nye realized at once that he could not wait for his friends if he would save the life of the girl, to do which prompt action was necessary.

Calling out with all his might for Knuckle and Hasler, the boy sprang at the sea-lion, and dealt it a blow on the head with his club. But the blow was not given in the right quarter; the monster seemed but little hurt, and now turned with fury upon its assailant.

As it came toward him, Nye struck at it again hitting it on the jaw. In an instant the from the boys' creature had the club in its mouth, jerked it grasp, and biting it in twain, as if it had been a mere wisp of straw, the brute dropped the pieces at the feet of the youth.

The latter now raised his knife but ere he could use it, the savage beast knocked him down, and he felt its cold, slimy form pressing on his breast.

Glaring down at him a moment, the monster opened its fangs and thrust them toward the throat of the young sailor. The latter plunged his knife to the hilt in the thick neck of the brute, which, with a horrible roar, and with the blood running down its mane then gave its head an upward fling thus pulling the knife from the grasp of its adversary, and sending it flying into the alcove. Down came its fangs again, when, with a wild cry, Ingluk, who had picked up the knife, sprung forward plunging the blade again and again into the side of the creature's neck.

The beast raised its head, its eyes glaring horribly, and its teeth, being now fixed in the boy's neck-tie, the youth was lifted with it, his face pressed against the grim visage of the monster, whose hot breath he could feel upon his cheek.

With a supple twist of its powerful form the brute knocked Ingluk down; then dashing Charley to the floor, the infuriated creature was about to drive its fangs deep into his throat when Knuckle followed by Hasler, came bounding into the cavern and with his club dealt the monster a tremendous crushing blow over the bridge of the nose.

The old mate who was an experienced sealer, had struck the fatal life-spot, and the lion, opening wide its mouth, uttering one wild prolonged cry, something between a scream and a roar, fell, with a heavy thud upon its side, stone dead.

"Flukes and flippers!" cried Knuckle, as Charley rose. "I hope you are not quite dead, yet, my lad!"

"Thank you, not quite!" assured Nye, as he rubbed his bruised head.

Ingluk stepping forward, looked anxiously at the youth. Then she said something to him quickly, and pressed his hand thankfully, after which she glided out of the cavern.

"Button my tarry Cupids!" exclaimed Knuckle, winking, "if there ain't a clean, shipshape case of love at first sight, then you can squeeze me into a hot bottle, and pickle me for Davy Jones!"

"Nonsense, Knuckle."

"Ay, lad, but I am right, though love, unless there's a sartinty of gittin' spliced, is nonsense. P'raps it's *always* nonsense, for that matter," added Knuckle, philosophically.

Just then loud cries were heard outside of the cavern. The two boys and Knuckle, hurrying out to ascertain the cause of the tumult, were overjoyed to perceive that the lost baby was found. The mother was holding her child in her arms.

The sailors subsequently learned that it had been found in a sheltered crevice among some rocks, where the sea-lion, probably gallied (alarmed) by the report of Knuckle's pistol on the night before, had evidently dropped the little one, who, having crawled still further down, into a hole among the rugged masses, had thus, for so long a time, escaped discovery.

CHAPTER V.

IN TROUBLE.

KNUCKLE and his two young shipmates now resolved to return to their quarters.

"Madam," said the old tar, bowing to the Esquimaux mother, and forgetting that the woman could not understand English, "allow me, madam, to express my extremest pleasure at this happy termination of what sartinty premised to be a most onfortunit sareumstance."

"Okollookee - pokee tamaya capotaki ingooduk, ingooduk," said the woman, opening her eyes very wide.

At this Knuckle took a bite of pigtail and looked very wise.

"Lads," he said, turning to his two young companions, "I forgot when I made my bow, and came the perlite with this 'ere lady, that I might as well have chucked p'arls into a whale's mouth, for, d'yee see, she can't understand good English. Now, you'll observe that she says 'Ingooduk,' and, having a nat'r'l appetite for l'arin' languages, I'll inform you that it means in plain English 'good duck! good duck!' which, I take it, is a compliment to me, and sartinty a deservin' one, as the fair sect always do pay me some such little expressage of their good-will, although I don't mean to brag of that same, and so we'll just belay there, and I'll go to work and skin my seals, and may I be blasted if I don't think Captain Stone will be glad enough to git that fur!"

So saying, Knuckles, whipping out his knife, at once went to work skinning the seals. This task he performed with the usual skill of one long trained to the business.

Turning each of the animals belly up, he ran his knife up the belly to the chin, then around the right flipper, and next around the flukes, after which he ripped off the skin with the same ease as one would peel an orange.

Carrying these skins over their shoulders, he and the boys now returned toward their dwelling. Arrived there, Knuckle fastened a rope to the skins and allowed them to hang in the water, one end of the rope being secured to a rock.

"How long are you going to leave them there?" inquired Nye.

"A few days," answered Knuckle, "arter which I'll take 'em out and salt 'em down all ready for Captain Stone to put in his hold."

They entered their dwelling, and to Yonkitt related their morning's adventures.

Dinner was soon ready, and the four did full justice to the meal.

As soon as Knuckle had finished smoking his pipe, he said to the Esquimaux:

"Now, Yonkitt, we will go to the settlement and find out what we can about our stolen provisions."

Leaving Nye this time to watch the house, Knuckle, Hasler, and Yonkitt repaired to the village of the Esquimaux.

This village consisted of about twenty huts made of the ribs of the whale and the walrus, and covered with the skins of the seal and the bear.

Most of them were shaped like an inverted bowl, and were large enough to contain six or seven persons.

As soon as the visitors entered this little settlement, they were surrounded by men, women and children. One of the former invited them to his dwelling. They entered it to behold a short, fat youth squatted on the ground, partaking of a chunk of raw blubber, which he

would now and then dip, by way of seasoning it, in a bone cup containing oil.

"By the eternal butterfish!" cried Knuckle, "that chap must have an oily tongue, to say nothing of t'other parts of him. I sartinty wish him all manner of happiness, and don't begrudge him his allowance."

The Esquimaux proprietor invited the old tar and his two companions to take a seat—that is to say, sit on the ground. They did so, when, going to a corner, their host dipped something from an earthen jar with a large, iron spoon, and presented it to Knuckle.

The old fourth mate scratched his head as he peered at the contents of the spoon.

"With all due respect to your hospitality, Skeemo, I'd like first to make a legal inquest as to what that 'ere spoon contains, for, may I be keelhauled if I can make it out."

"Stewed seal," said Yonkitt. "Not much fat—think you like—stewed with lichen."

"Well, now, I'm blasted if you git any sick lubberly mixture down my gullet!" roared Knuckle. "I'd as soon eat onions b'iled with beans, which is my particlular avarsion."

"Good eat," said Yonkitt. "better take some. Esquimaux feel hurt if refuse."

"Hurt?" cried Knuckle. "I think I'm the one that would be hurt if I put sich stuff in my digestives. You can thank him for me all the same though, Yonkitt, for nat'r'l politeness requires that, and tell him not to offer me any more of his infarnal stews, or, dash me, if I'll ever visit his blasted wigwam again."

Yonkitt therefore declined the stew for his companion, at which the Esquimaux host seemed much surprised.

The interpreter, however, accepted it himself, greatly to the disgust of Knuckle, who shrugged his shoulders and roared out an involuntary "Ugh!" with such vehemence that the host and his son started as if they had been shot.

"Now, then, heave ahead, Yonkitt!" continued Knuckle. "You'd better open about them stolen provisions without further prevarication, and, hark ye, Yonkitt, just put it down in legal form, do you see, commencin' in this wise:

"Whereas, sartinty things having been stolen from our premises, we, the undertakers, of the good ship Beacon, Captain Stone, square-rigged craft, carryin' r'ys and stu'nalls, which can beat any craft out, on a wind, think you stole 'em, and if you don't give 'em up to us, before eatin' 'em up yourselves, may we be flabbergasted if we don't burn every blasted one of your 'ly huts about your 'ly ears, seal-stews and all!"

Yonkitt, however, chose to modify this declamation a little in translating it to his countryman. The latter seemed astonished. He looked at Knuckle, shaking his head rapidly and speaking very fast, then he gave a loud grunt and ran out of the hut.

"Button my eyeballs!" cried Knuckle, "if there ain't proof positive, as they put it in legal terms, seeing as the victim has run away!"

"Him gone for more Esquimaux," said Yonkitt. "Better go outside."

"Ay, ay, Yonkitt; outside we go, for, blow me, if I'm not determined to sift this matter to the bottom."

They had not been outside of the hut five minutes, when along came their host, with a dozen of his people following at his back.

Confronting the old sailor, they all commenced talking vehemently at once.

"Dey say not 'teal,'" cried Yonkitt, translating; "dem say if 'teal, you look and see if find 'tolen tings."

At this, Knuckle leaned far back, his mouth widening tremendously with a sort of derisive smile; in fact, his lips and mouth opened so wide that the Esquimaux leaned forward, peering at him, as if they expected to see the two parts of his head drop asunder.

"Of all the argyments advanced," cried Knuckle, as soon as he could find breath, "the one which the victim now puts forth must, to use a legal p'int of law, fall to the ground and be swallowed up afterward, seeing as the stolen goods may be what's tarmed in law a *habeus corpus*, or, in t'other words, eaten up."

Again Yonkitt translated.

The Esquimaux looked surprised and indignant. They uttered shouts, drew their knives and flourished them menacingly, while they gradually drew nearer to the sailors.

Yonkitt endeavored to appease them, but his efforts seemed useless. The sailors being now surrounded by a circle of knives, their situation was becoming critical. Many more of the Esquimaux hurried toward the scene, the buzzing of their angry voices rising ominously, while they kept closing upon their visitors, who were

soon hemmed in by the swarthy Northmen, who now formed a compact mass, which precluded all possibility of the whites escaping.

Among them was a person named Ayatak, who was the chief or magic-man of the tribe, and who, now flourishing his arms, made himself heard above the loud murmurs of the rest. As he ceased speaking, his people brandished their knives and seemed actually about to attack the three sailors, when the woman who had lost her baby appeared, and, rushing among the angry crowd, held up her child in front of them, while she addressed them in a loud, guttural voice.

"She say not attack us," said Yonkitt to Knuckle; "dat we good people; dat you give molass to baby, and give her nice ball of wax to eat, and dat Nye save her daughter Ingluk's life."

"The less said about the *wax*, the better," replied Knuckle. "The stolen provisions is the main p'int of the case."

As the woman continued to speak, one of the Esquimaux, whose name was afterward ascertained to be @kotook, and who was her husband, seized her by the shoulders and pulled her away from the throng.

The threatening aspect and movements of the latter, showing that they had not been appeased, and the old fourth mate now drew his loaded revolver, while Hasler firmly grasped a harpoon with which he was provided. But at that critical moment, Ingluk, the Esquimaux girl, came bounding along, and, forcing her way into the center of the circle, she rapidly and vehemently addressed her people.

Her words appeared to have the intended effect, for the Esquimaux returned their knives to their belts.

"Esquimaux want to be friends," said Yonkitt to his two shipmates. "Ingluk tell them you only make mistake. That Indian is de teef who 'teal tings from our house!"

"Indians?"

"Yes, tribe of Dog-rib!"

"Ay, ay, now," said Knuckle, "the name sartinly has a thieving sound, but did she see them steal the things?"

"No, she only t'ink so. Dog-ribs have camp a few miles from dis place. Come here only four days ago. Been chase, Ingluk t'ink, by Chippeway, and have to run away, so come to dis part of country. Esquimaux and Dog-rib berry bad friends."

"Perfectly nat'r'l," said the old fourth mate, scratching his bullet head, "that folks with sich names should have enemies. To use a legal p'int of law, a *bad name* is circumstantial evidence, and I sartinly feel convinced, now that them Dog-ribs is the victims, arter all. I'm determined, from this time, to have a lookout posted, and I hope yet to get to wind'ard of the 'Ribs' and give 'em a piece of my mind. I may give 'em a dose of powder and b'iled lead, for that matter," added Knuckle, thoughtfully, as he and his two shipmates quitted the settlement.

CHAPTER VI.

THE NIGHT VISIT.

THE old sailor kept his word about the lookout, but night after night passed, and the house was not disturbed. A week after the visit to the settlement, Nye had the first watch. Provided with Knuckle's revolver, he seated himself behind a pile of lumber in the room with the broken window. Hasler and the fourth mate had each a bed on the floor in the adjoining apartment. The watcher could hear their heavy breathing, indicating that they were fast asleep. Scarcely believing the statement about the Dog-ribs, and feeling quite convinced that no thieves would attempt to visit the house while it was occupied, Charley was not as vigilant as he might have been.

Worn out with his recent exertions, he sat for awhile, listening to the howling of the blast about the building, and then dropped off into a light slumber.

He suddenly awoke to hear a slightly rustling noise in the next room.

"Knuckle, is that you?" he inquired, in a low voice.

There was no reply.

The youth repeated his question, but still there was no answer.

Rising, he lighted the lantern, which he had placed near him. He then noticed that two of the planks which had been nailed over the window were removed!

"That looks suspicious," he thought; "the wind could not have blown the boards in."

He looked at them closely, to perceive that

the nails had been wrenched out by a hard push and by twisting the planks.

He was about to spring to the door and open it, when he beheld a pair of savage eyes gleaming upon him through the opening of the window.

The tawny face to which these eyes belonged was that of an Indian, whose long, black hair streamed down from under his pointed bear-skin cap, and whose face, grotesquely painted with blue and black streaks, had huge copper rings dangling from the ears and nose. Ere Charley could utter a word, the savage, as quick as a flash, bounded into the room, and caught the youth by the throat with an iron grasp which nearly suffocated the young sailor. At the same time he raised a long knife, and aimed a swift blow at the boy's heart.

As the blade descended, Nye pressing the muzzle of his revolver against the ribs of the savage, fired.

But the wily Indian, the moment he felt the cold iron, had twisted himself sideways like a serpent, so that the bullet instead of passing through his body, went whizzing slantingly upward, tearing along the flesh of his forearm, and piercing the hand which held the knife. From his stiffened fingers the blade fell clattering to the floor, but the savage, although he must have suffered great pain, made no outcry, and still kept his other hand on the throat of his adversary.

Before the latter could again fire, the Indian clasped him round the body with the strength of a bear, keeping so close against him that Nye could not move his pistol, and endeavoring to hurl him to the floor. Although Charley was not a bad wrestler, he was no match for the native, who possessed twice his strength, and who at such close quarters, succeeded in hurling him down.

In an instant the knee of the savage was upon the hand which held the pistol, his other knee pressed upon the boy's breast, and his left hand again upon his throat. While the youth was vainly struggling to free himself, the door opened, and another Indian appeared, loaded with plunder.

Dropping the articles he held, the moment he took in the situation of affairs, he sprung forward, and pulling from his belt a heavy stone hatchet, he raised it above the head of the prostrate boy.

In another second it would have crushed through the forehead of the lad; but as it was about to descend, the loud report of a gun was heard, and the savage dropping his weapon, fell forward toward the window, through which he quickly scrambled and disappeared.

The other native sprung after him, and the half-choked boy staggered to his feet.

"Ahoy! there!" cried Knuckle, who had been awakened by the noise, and who now came bounding into the room with his smoking gun in his hand. "What's up, here?"

"Give me your gun!" cried Hasler, who had also come, and peering through the window at the two receding forms, which were not yet quite out of sight in the darkness.

"No," said Knuckle, "we haven't any too much ammunition, and there's no use of wasting it. A shot in the dark is not often a sartin one."

"Are you hurt, Nye?" inquired Tom, anxiously, as Charley still gasped for breath.

"No," said Nye, smiling; "but it seems to me as if I can still feel the fingers of that fellow on my throat. His hand was like iron."

Knuckle brought a little rum, and gave it to the youth, who was nearly prostrated by his late exertions.

"It was all my fault," said Charley, "I should have kept a better lookout."

"So long as there's been no mischief done," said Knuckle, as he picked up the articles which the savage had dropped, "we can't complain, but my advice to you is, for the futur', to keep your weather eye open when you are on watch, seein' as you might have been brainied at your post, had them natives seen you there on the lookout."

"Still worse, you and Hasler might have been slaughtered in your beds," said Charley. "I could never have forgiven myself bad that happened, as I would have been to blame."

"Flukes and flippers! it was perfectly nat'r'al for you to feel a little careless. To tell the truth, I had about given up all idea of them Injuns bein' consarned in the robbery, and begun to feel sartin that the Skeemos, in spite of their yarn, were the thieves." The night having nearly passed, the party did not again think of again seeking their beds.

Early in the morning, they went out, to see a track of blood leading off from under the win-

dow, toward the interior. This track had evidently been left by the Indian, who was last wounded.

"Lads," said Knuckle, thoughtfully, "this won't be the last time we hear from them accursed Ribs, now that one of their number has been so badly wounded. They nat'rally take to revenge as ducks take to water, and we must be on our guard."

As he spoke he looked up at the lofty height, near the base of which the little house was erected.

"There," he continued, "is a good place for a fort."

"A fort?" cried Hasler.

"Ay, not a reg'lar fort, but a kind of a stronghold, do you see, to which we can retreat and hold out, in case we are pushed to extremities. It is of the greatest importance that we secure that position, as it is the place from which we can signal our craft. First, however, we must fix things so that the savages can only come up to us on one side."

"How are we to do that?" said Tom. "They can come up on two sides, although the other sides are too steep to be scaled."

Knuckle pointed out to the boys a huge rock, near the summit of the elevation.

"That," said he, "we can roll down to the rocky shelf you see about twenty feet below, and that shelf having ridges on the side of it, will hold the rock there when it comes down by the run. The bowlder once there, I'd defy the infarnal imps themselves from gittin' over it."

"Ay, but how are we to dislodge it from its position?" said Nye.

"By blastin', of course. You can see it is just held in its place by a branch of rock, about as thick as a ship's mainmast. When we blast that away, down goes the bowlder."

"Good!" said Tom.

"Then, again," said Knuckle, "we all know that there is a big hollow near the top of the elevation, which will serve for a cave—will make us good enough quarters when we are pushed. The very first thing to do now is to git some provision up there; but we must do it cautiously, so that neither the Injuns nor the Skeemos will know that we stow it there."

"Do you really think things have come to this pass?" inquired Tom.

"Ay, ay; I can see which way the wind blows. Depend on it, them Injuns won't forgit that shot in a hurry."

"But would not the Esquimaux help us fight the Indians?" said Nye.

"No. Them chaps is afeared of Injuns, and they'd make a poor fight ag'in' them, even to defend their own oily carcasses. Remember, my lads, that here we are, only four of us, now on a hospital (Knuckle meant *hostile*) coast, from which we must trust to being picked up by our own craft, which may be delayed, for that matter, the Lord only knows how long."

These words made a deep impression on the boys, for they knew that Knuckle, as brave as a lion, was not to be frightened at shadows.

When night came the four seamen at once set about conveying provisions to the hollow, near the summit of the rock. With lumber and canvas Knuckle prepared a good depository for their stores, which were carefully concealed by pieces of rock piled in front of the rude cupboard.

A few days later, the bowlder, by means of blasting, was also sent down to the rocky platform below, thus forming an insurmountable barrier on that side.

After that, Knuckle and his companions busied themselves making the cave as comfortable as possible for their reception. Blankets, canvas, oakum, a lantern, and many other things were conveyed there—in fact, the hollow was made habitable, although it might prove to be a cold residence.

On the fourth night after the party commenced to furnish the cavern, Tom Hasler was ascending the rocky elevation to convey to the hollow a bag of oakum, with a musket and some ammunition, which Knuckle thought might be spared from their stock for the present.

It was a clear, moonlight night, and as Tom climbed over a spur of rock, which afforded him a view of the opening of the cavern, he fancied he could detect a moving shadow, thrown out on a rugged platform extending from the base of the rock in which the hollow of the cave was situated.

The shadow was an uncouth one. It was like that of a human being, with two points projecting from the head! It oscillated to and fro on the platform, in a singular manner; and the youth fancied he could hear a gnawing sound, like that made by eating.

"What the deuce is it?" thought Tom. "It looks as if it might be Old Nick of the infernal regions! Whatever it is, it has evidently got at our provisions, in spite of the stone wall we put up in front of the cupboard."

Tom now approached the cavern quickly and cautiously, but when within a few yards of the shadow, he thought it best to pause and load his gun from the ammunition pouch at his side.

As careful as he was in loading it, it was evident that the noise of the rammer had been heard, for all at once the shadow disappeared.

CHAPTER VII.

A CALAMITY.

TOM approached the cavern and peered behind the rock, where the object which had thrown the shadow must have been stationed when he first saw its reflection.

There were a few rifts and hollows in the rock beside the cavern. He searched among these, but he found nothing.

Then he moved toward the cavern.

As he did so, a gaunt, shaggy animal of a brown color emerged from the hollow, with part of a ham in its mouth.

"A brown bear!" cried Tom. "The fellow has been at the provisions!"

As he spoke, the animal dropped the morsel it held and approached the youth, who was in the only path by which it could descend from the elevation. The moonlight falling upon the grim beast, distinctly revealed its proportions. It was about five feet in length, with patches of earth and pieces of gravel clinging to its shaggy coat. From its drooping head its round eyes glared savagely, and its tongue partly protruded from its red mouth, in which its long, sharp fangs were plainly visible.

Tom at once brought his gun to his shoulder and aimed it at the head of the brute.

The latter, as if divining his intention, gave a low growl and bounded toward him.

Hasler pulled trigger, but his weapon did not go off.

He sprung backward, attempting to put a fresh cap on his piece.

But his heel struck a protuberance of rock behind him, and he fell upon his back.

When he gained his feet, the bear was standing upon its hind-legs, ready to grasp him for the fatal hug.

He struck at it with the butt of his gun, but the stock was broken on the hard head of the monster. Tom, as quick as a flash, rammed what was left of it into the mouth of the beast, which, however, caught the iron barrel in its teeth and flung it aside. Not having even his knife with him at present, the young man's situation had become a perilous one. To attempt to run must insure his destruction, as the bear would be sure to overtak him.

There was an elevation of rock rising in a jagged column at his side, and clutching this, he swung himself to the top of it, at the same time shouting for assistance.

He could now see Knuckle, gun in hand, emerge from the house at the base of the bight, followed by Yonkitt and Nye, who were also armed.

Meanwhile the bear, which was a good climber, had placed its fore-legs on top of the column, and was drawing itself up to the summit of it.

Tom looked behind him. On that side, the column was even with the steep and nearly perpendicular wall of the precipice.

"I'm afeared to fire!" shouted Knuckle, "lest I hit you, my lad!"

"I must stay here!" answered Tom. "There is no way to climb down the other side."

All at once the thought occurred to him to make use of the bag of oakum slung to his back. It hung loosely by a small rope which served as a sort of handle.

Quickly disengaging the bag Tom threw the bight of the rope over the bear's neck, which projected over the edge of the rock, as the brute was about to draw itself up. A loosened piece of rock having given way under the hind feet of the heavy animal the latter was still scrambling in its efforts to mount the column. This delay gave Hasler time to pull from his pocket a metal match-box, which he always carried with him for the purpose of lighting his pipe. Igniting one of the matches, he now set fire to the bag of oakum which he had hung upon the bear's neck, and which, in a moment blazed up into a lurid mass of flame! Scorched and half-blinded by the flames that now rolled over its head and body, the brute, with a growl of pain tumbled from its position, falling to the base of the column. The blazing bag, which had been hung loosely to its neck and the rope

of which was already nearly burned through, rolled away from it. Confused and half maddened with the sufferings it endured from the injury to its half-scorched eyeballs, the monster turned its head from side to side, and kept raising one of its paws, as if it were striving to remove the cause of its trouble.

At that moment the crack of Knuckle's gun was heard, and a twitch of the creature's body indicated that it had been struck.

The bullet had passed slantingly through one of its haunches, and the animal now started along the rocky descent, making off as fast as it could go.

Yonkitt and his two companions stood ready half-way up the hight to plant some more bullets in its body, but the animal concealed itself in the hollows of the rocks near this part of the descent.

A search was made for the beast, Tom now assisting, and a few minutes later, the brute was again seen dashing down the path, some distance ahead.

The four pursuers followed it, now and then firing, but apparently, without effect, for, as a general thing, seafaring men are not very good shots.

In the excitement of the chase, the pursuers forgot for a time that they were leaving their little house unguarded behind them.

Not until they were two miles from it, did they pause.

"We'll not find that bear to-night," said Knuckle, "he's disappeared somewhere among the rocks on the beach. We'd better sheer off now, and git back to our—Hello! flukes and thunders!"

The sudden exclamation was caused by a broad gleam of lurid light far behind the party.

"What do you think it is?" cried Nye.

The four stood looking at each other in dismay.

"The high rocks between us and the fire hide a good deal of it from us," said Tom; "but I'm afraid it's our house."

"Let's hope not," said Knuckle, "let's hope not. It's bad time now, with winter on us, to lose our comfortable quarters. By the eternal tadpole!" added Knuckle, beating his breast. "What a lubber I was to leave the place unwatched even for so short a time!"

"You think then it has been set on fire?" said Nye.

"Sart'ainly; it couldn't have happened t'otherwise. In my opinion them Dog-ribs is at the bottom of it. But let's hope that it ain't our house, arter all—ay, ay, let's hope so."

The party hurried in the direction of the flames, which were now shooting up, lighting land, sky and sea.

Finally they were near enough to obtain an unobstructed view, which set all further doubts at rest.

It was their house which was on fire, and which was now nearly burned to the ground!

No person was to be seen near the dwelling, but some Esquimaux soon came, having been attracted by the glare of the flames.

Arriving close to the remains of their dwelling, the four sailors stood looking disconsolately at the smoking embers.

Everything the house had contained—provisions, planks, bedding and many other useful articles were destroyed!

The Esquimaux who came up now stood talking excitedly among themselves.

Yonkitt questioned them, but they could tell him nothing as to the cause of the calamity.

They suspected, with the sailors, that it was the work of the Indians.

"Of course," said Knuckle, "we are not sart'ain on that pint. The stove-pipe may have tumbled down and caused the fire. One thing is sart'ain, which is that we are now houseless, and winter on us, as it is already the beginnin' of October. The cave would be cold quarters, and we can't think of livin' there until we are pushed to it, to say nothin' of there being hardly provision enough there to last us for two weeks."

Not far off stood Ingluk, the Esquimaux girl, who had accompanied her people to the fire. Her dark eyes were fixed earnestly upon Nye, and she finally turned and said something to her companions. The guttural voices of these sons of the North were now heard as they collected about the seamen.

"They say we must come and live with them. They very sorry we no house. Will try to make us comfort," explained Yonkitt.

"God bless their 'ly hearts!" cried Knuckle. "They are sart'ainly very kind arter the suspicions we had against 'em some days ago."

Yonkitt looked a little uneasy.

"Esquimaux much afraid of Injun," he said. "I know it; well, we ain't asked 'em to help us fight them lubbers," said the fourth mate.

"Nao, but if Injun burn house, Injun burn for revenge, and one of Esquimaux say white men better go away from here!"

"Go away!" cried Knuckle. "I should like to know where we can go to! No, Yonkitt, we can't leave this part of the coast, seeing as it is here that Captain Stone will come for us!"

"Only one Esquimaux say we better go away," remarked Yonkitt.

"Which one is it, for the Lord's sake?" cried the fourth mate.

"Okotook—he sat one dere," said the interpreter, indicating the one alluded to with a nod of his head. "Him husband of woman whose baby you give molass to. Him jealous of you!"

"Jealous!" roared Knuckle.

"Yes, for squaw been berry kind to you—smile on you—say you have big mouth!"

"What has that to do with it?"

"She like big mouth. Okotook 'fraid she like too much."

Knuckle pulled a plug of tobacco from his pocket, and bit off a good part of it. Then he gave both legs a jerk as if something in Yonkitt's remark had caused them to "kink."

"Well," he said, drawing a long breath, "there's nothing surprisin' in your statement, Yonkitt, arter all. The fair sect always did take to me, and its presumable that they always will. One thing, hows'er is sure, which is that, no matter how much Okotook's wife may take to me, I'll sartainly never take to her!"

CHAPTER VIII.

A PERILOUS WALRUS HUNT.

CLOUDS passed over the moon, and snow began to fall as the sailors walked with the Esquimaux toward their village.

On reaching it, the party was divided and sent to different huts.

Okotook was careful to have Knuckle domesticated in the one the furthest removed from the domicile occupied by his wife and daughter. Ingluk managed things so that Nye should have his quarters in the hut with her, while Yonkitt and Husler were placed in a house adjoining.

Ingluk spread out one of her own fur coats for Nye to lie upon, and covered him warmly and comfortably with some bear and fox-skins.

After he fell asleep, and when her father her mother and the little round baby had also dropped off, the girl long sat up, silently watching the handsome American boy.

Meanwhile Knuckle, in the further hut, was having a rather warm time of it. A large fat elderly squaw, rolled round and round in a wadding of warm skins, lay on one side of him, snoring lustily, and on his other side, was her son, an enormous youth weighing nearly two hundred.

"I don't object to lie in a nat'r'l way," thought Knuckle, "but when I'm squeezed in between two living ice-casks, which has jist had their fill of blubber, things is different. These critters have sea-room enough, without jammin' up against me, and blast my tarry Cupids if I'll put up with it!"

So saying Knuckle thrust out an elbow on each side of him, and commenced to push each of his bedfellows with it in the small of the back.

The Esquimaux are sound sleepers. These two only grunted without awaking as Runkle continued to push.

Having shoved them almost out of the tent, the fourth mate rolled over upon his back and was soon in a deep slumber.

He was awakened toward morning by a ponderous weight upon his breast, and he perceived that the heavy youth now lay across him, still sound asleep.

"Marciful codfish!" cried Knuckle, "git off, won't ye?" But the sleeper never budged. Upon which, rolling over with some difficulty under this heavy weight, the old sailor rose quickly to his knees, hoisting the Esquimaux so vigorously with his posteriors that the youth turned a summerset over his head, his heels striking the skins and frame of the hut so forcibly as to bring down the structure.

Half smothered cries from the occupants now betokened that all were awake; in fact the three were completely enveloped and entangled among the fallen skins. Alarmed and confused on being thus suddenly awakened, the Esquimaux, kicking and floundering about, got astride of the fourth mate.

"Ay, ay! now, what are you about?" roared Knuckle. "Git off, will ye? Git off, WON'T ye? Git off, CAN'T ye?"

And each time he spoke, he dealt the twain a vigorous punch in the ribs with his fist.

At last the three disengaged themselves from the skins.

The Esquimaux whom Knuckle had capsized supposed that he had knocked down the tent by whirling over in his sleep.

"Eternal finbacks!" cried the old sailor, "you don't catch me sleepin' in that lubberly contrivance again!"

Yonkitt had now come up. The Esquimaux as they set about repairing the hut, kept up an incessant chatter.

"What are they saying Yonkitt?" inquired the old tar. "They are not finding fault with me?"

"Yes. Say they not sleep with you any more. Too much 'punch' in ribs!"

"As if they didn't deserve it! Why, bless my eyes! I dreamed that a whale was a-top of me, and when I woke I found I wasn't far out of my reckonin'."

"They say you must sleep in odder hut; must make for yourself. I tell 'em berry well. We make hut for ourselves. Den we can all be togeder. Dey say day go on walrus hunt to-day, and you can go wid dem and git skins and bone for making big hut."

"It'll sartainly be an outlandish consarn, but I'm perfectly willing to try it, arter last night's experience."

Most of the Esquimaux of the little settlement were now awake. Here and there, near some of the tents, were upright poles, with a cross-stick on top. Many of the women brought out pots, with iron hooks, and with sticks made a fire. They did not light the fagots with matches, but procured fire by turning a stick swiftly around in a hole made in a piece of plank, by means of which they ignited some timber which they had ready for that purpose. Pieces of blubber and seal's flesh were cut into strips, and mixed with lichen (dry moss) were put into some of the pots for a stew.

Knuckle shook his head, and at once applied a hand to his nose.

"Periteness requires me to thank your Skeemos," he said to Yonkitt, "for the breakfast they are gettin' ready for us, but you can tell 'em that I'd sooner be b'iled in one of their pots than eat it! No, we'll go up to the cave in the Lookout Rock for our meal."

A few minutes later, however, Ingluk came up with a pan containing something that emitted a savory odor, her mother following behind with a large chunk of meat attached to the end of a spear.

Nye and Hasler were now with Knuckle, and to the former Ingluk, smiling, presented the pan, while her mother eagerly thrust the meat on the spear toward the old tar.

"Your servent, madam," said Knuckle, making his best bow, "but may I ventur' to inquire as to the animal to which that 're meat, by good rights belongs?"

Yonkitt put the question for him, and the answer was that it came from a bear they had killed on the previous night. In fact, by further questioning, it was discovered that the bear killed was the very one which the fourth mate and his companions had been in pursuit of. The pan presented by Ingluk to Nye, contained a stew, prepared by the damsel herself from the same bear.

The sailors having a good appetite, made an excellent meal with the assistance of some sea-biscuit, which Yonkitt chanced to have in his coat-pocket.

After breakfast the Esquimaux were ready to start on the walrus hunt, which was to furnish Knuckle and his party with skins enough for the making of a large tent. Three of the light boats or kajaks, which were kept on spiles driven into the ground near some of the huts, were raised and carried to the water.

The sailors embarked in one, and four Esquimaux were in each of the others. Yonkitt, from a few spears in the boat, passed one to the fourth mate. There was also a coil of walrus-hide rope in the craft, attached to a shorter spear.

"Good weapons," said Knuckle, "but I think I'd prefer our own, as we are more used to 'em. We must bring our boat up to the shore alongside of the settlement as soon as we have finished to-day's hunt."

Using their paddles, the crews of the boats were soon on their way.

At length they entered a bay between lofty rocks.

Suddenly the Esquimaux stopped paddling,

as the head of a huge walrus was thrust above the water.

With its round eyes, its long tusks, and its visage having something human in its expression, the appearance of this creature was weird and peculiar. It uttered a singular noise, between a bark and a roar, as it stared at the boats.

The next moment the heads of many other walruses popped up above the surface of the water.

Spear in hand, an Esquimaux rose in the bow of his boat. He took good aim at one of the monsters, and whiz went the weapon, lodging in the creature's body, just back of the head. At the same time Knuckle also hurled his spear into one of the animals, while simultaneously, the Esquimaux in the remaining boat sent his barbed weapon into the body of a third, so that the three boats were all fast nearly at one and the same time.

In an instant down went the walruses, plunging into the depths, dragging the boats along into a water-cavern that yawned in one of the rocks.

Away they went for some minutes with great speed, while a hoarse bellowing rolled through the cavern astern of the crews.

"What is that?" said Nye.

"It is the walruses, lad; the other critters following us astarn," said Knuckle.

By this time Charley's eyes had become sufficiently accustomed to the dim light in the cave to enable him to see the dusky, tusked heads and round eyes of about twenty morses, dashing the water to foam as they came on after the fast boats.

Suddenly the speed of the latter stopped. The water parted ahead, and up rose the three monsters, with the harpoons in them, plunging madly about, staining the water with their blood.

"Haul line!" roared Knuckle.

The crew obeyed. The natives also hauled in line, and now lance after lance went whistling on its way, to be buried in the huge bodies of the animals. Now and then the latter would make a plunge for the boats, but their assailants, working skillfully, avoided them.

Meanwhile the morses astarn were fast coming up. Already they were within a few fathoms of the boats.

"Look out for the critters astern, lads, while I see to the one we are fast to. They might run afoul of the boat and capsize it," said the fourth mate.

Spear in hand, Yonkitt and each of the two lads stood ready.

Half a dozen huge bulls, leaping nearly their length from the water, dashed toward the boat. Yonkitt drove his spear into one, but Nye and Hasler were not so fortunate. The weapons of both were caught on the enormous tusks of the sea-morses, which now hurled themselves on both sides of the light craft, so near that there was great danger of their upsetting it.

Occasionally, when wounded by harpoon or lance, the walrus will turn upon its assailant and show fight, but this is not often the case. It is usually the rushing, the leaping and bounding of the animal to and fro, in its efforts to escape, that endangers the fast boat. As a general rule, when human beings are very near it, the creature will plunge out of sight or swim away from them; but when one of their comrades is fastened to, or has been slain, the daring pertinacity with which these animals will hover about the dead body, in spite of the vicinity of any number of their foes, is truly remarkable.

At this instant the walrus which was fastened to, starting ahead, dragged Knuckle's boat away from the others, which then, with a roar as of baffled rage, disappeared under the water.

"Gone!" said Nye.

"We see again," remarked Yonkitt, shaking the spray from his coal-black hair.

On went the boat with great swiftness. It was soon near the further extremity of the rocky arch, where the walls on each side were not more than ten feet apart, and where the water was shallow. The walrus fastened to came bellowing to the surface again, and again Knuckle's spear whistled through the air.

With one farewell moan, the huge bull rolled over on its side—dead. At the same moment a roar like thunder was heard.

"Where did that come from?" said Nye, glancing round him in surprise, for he could see nothing.

"Look!" cried Yonkitt, pointing upward, on both sides of the cavern.

The roar was repeated. Charley looked up, to behold a singular spectacle.

It seemed to him that more than fifty of the demon-like sea-morses, were collected on each side of the cavern.

There they were, on the rocky, projecting shelves above the very heads of the crew—their forms as large as those of bulls, with their strange-looking eyes and their long tusks revealed in the dim light.

"Starn! starn! lively lads, lively!" yelled Knuckle.

The crew obeyed, slowly towing the dead walrus along.

The bellowing of the morses was now become terrific.

They peered from the rocky ledges with fierce, flaming eyes, at the boat, thrashing the wall with their flippers, as if in a rage.

It was a perilous gantlet for that boat's crew to run, for they expected every moment that the monsters would drop down upon them in the narrow passage they were threading!

"Steady—lads—steady but swift is the word!" hissed Knuckle through his clinched teeth.

The sight of their dead friend seemed to work the morses up to a pitch of fury.

All at once one of the monsters, dropped from the ledge, but as the passage was here a little wider than further beyond, the animal missed the boat, and struck the water. This was a signal for the others, and, for several minutes, the crushing of the falling bodies was heard. Astern—ahead—on all sides of the boat they dropped, the whole living mass bounding and rushing about the light craft!

Only for an instant could Knuckle and his companions use their spears, then boat and crew disappeared in this vortex of white tusks, glaring eyes and plunging bodies.

The enormous tusks of some of the animals catching on the inside of the light boat occupied by the sailors, had capsized it, and the four now found themselves, the moment they rose from under the surface, up to their waist in the shallow water of the rocky passage, standing in the very midst of the bellowing herd of morses.

Hemmied in as they were by the walruses, their situation was one of great peril.

There was danger every moment that they would receive a blow from the flippers, the heads or the tusks of these monsters in such violent commotion around them.

"Now, lads!" cried Knuckle, at length noticing a cleared space between the animals and the rocks at the base of one of the cavern walls. "Now, lads, follow me!"

"What has become of our boat?" cried Hasler.

"The Lord only knows; it is probably torn to pieces by the tusks of them critters by this time," answered Knuckle.

A minute later the four, their teeth chattering with the cold, were climbing out of the water upon the rocks.

All were soon out except Nye, whose foot had slipped, causing him to fall back into the water. He went over sideways, and, unfortunately, at the same moment, a huge walrus plunged past the spot where he fell.

Hasler had stretched out his hand to help the boy up when, to his horror, he beheld one of the tusks of the walrus catch in the lad's open jacket, the cloth of which it pierced!

As the monster went careering on, Charley was jerked from the grasp of his friend and borne along by the uncouth creature, which, however, seemed to make wild efforts to disengage its tusk from its unwelcome burden.

There was a cry of dismay from the three seamen, as they endeavored to keep up along the rocks with the animal which was thus dragging off their young shipmate.

Meanwhile Charley, in his attempts to free himself from the huge sea-morse, had twisted his body half round, so that he now lay on his side partly over the back of the monster.

His pursuing friends were within seven fathoms of him when they saw the walrus about to descend with him through a large water-hole in the rocks at the side of the cavern.

"Avast, there, avast!" yelled Knuckle.

"God help the lad! that infarnal morse is going to drag him down through that hole, under water!"

Hasler raised the spear he still held, but Knuckle caught his arm.

"No living man could strike the morse at this distance without hitting the boy! Your spear would only pin the poor lad to the critter!"

"Then he is lost! he is lost!" groaned Hasler.

There was a keen flash in Yonkitt's eyes. With one hand he dashed the wet black hair from his eyes. Then his long spear was raised on high.

"Avast! You'll kill the boy!" cried Knuckle.

But even as he spoke, a half smile curled the lip of the young Esquimaux, and his barbed weapon flew whistling from his hand. With unerring precision, it sped, passed within an inch of Charley's neck, struck the life-spot it had been aimed at, and sinking deep into the morse's body at the very moment when the animal was about to plunge downward into the water-hole, the creature rolled over on its side, stone dead, as if smitten by a thunderbolt!

Charley's life was saved! He disengaged himself from the tusk of the walrus, and joined his friends on the rocks.

CHAPTER IX.

A TERRIBLE SLEIGH-RIDE.

By this time the herd of living sea-morses had collected in the further part of the passage about the body of the animal which had previously been fastened to and killed.

The two sealskin boats of the other Esquimaux hunters arrived soon after, to pick up the three sailors. Drenched and cold as they were, they were glad to help tow the dead walruses to land.

There the animals were skinned and cut up by the Esquimaux, the seamen moving on to the settlement.

Soon after the arrival of these men with the skins, many of the tribe were seen running hither and thither, the tears coursing down the fat cheeks of some of the women and children.

"Dem cry for loss of sealskin boat," explained Yonkitt. "Dat der way; sometimes cry, have weeping meeting, if only sealskin line break!"

A few days later, the skins having been dried, a large and commodious tent was erected on one side of the village for the whalers. Most of the people were very kind to them, and furnished them with furs, cooking utensils, and other useful things. In return for their hospitality, Knuckle and his companions continued to assist them in their hunts for seals, walruses, etc.

The whale-boat had been brought up to that part of the coast nearest the settlement, and the sailors always used this craft, when they hunted with the Esquimaux. Bear's flesh and salmon with provisions brought from their cave, were now their principal food, of which they had thus far obtained a sufficient supply.

Meanwhile Okotoak, whose jealousy of Knuckle had not abated, still endeavored by every means in his power, to persuade his people to send the whites away. He was often observed to harangue many of the Esquimaux, who were gathered around him.

His speech, which had much influence with these superstitious people was, as translated by Yonkitt, to the effect that he had a dream in which it was revealed to him that misfortune would be certain to follow their taking the whites to live among them. The loss of their seal-skin boat was the beginning of these misfortunes.

At length the time drew near when the sailors might expect the return of the Beacon, and an occasional watch was kept by the old tar from "Lookout Rock"—the cliff which has been alluded to—the one near which their house had formerly stood.

Winter was settled, game had become more scarce than formerly, and as the sailors could not yet bring themselves to partake of the seal's flesh and blubber which was enjoyed by the Esquimaux there were times when they had nothing to eat.

"By the etarnal blackfish!" cried Knuckle, one cold morning, as he stood with his friends on the Lookout cliff which was now white with frozen snow—"we ought to see something of our craft by this time, but there's no sign of her yet."

Suddenly Yonkitt laid a hand on the old sailor's arm.

"Look!" he cried, "Injun come!"

As he spoke he pointed toward a small party of savages, who were visible in the distance, moving toward the settlement.

The sailors crouched among the rocks, and watched the Indians.

Halting when within a hundred yards of the huts, one of the savages raised a spear with a piece of a blanket fluttering from the end, and waved it to and fro.

"What does that mean?" inquired Nye.

"It means," said Yonkitt, "that they want to speak to Esquimaux."

"So they are not going to attack them?" said Nye.

"No, but me no like they speak to Esquimaux. Dem people come for no good."

It was some time before any of the Esquimaux

appeared from the settlement. At last a number of them, well armed with spears, and headed by the chief man of the tribe, advanced toward the Indians.

At length a colloquy appeared to take place between the two parties. It lasted for some minutes, after which the Indians hurried off.

"Can your Skeemos and them chaps understand each other?" inquired Knuckle.

"Some Dog-rib speak a little Esquimaux," replied Yonkitt.

When the sailors entered the settlement, hours later, they were met by Ayatak, the chief, Okotook and a number of others.

The former addressed himself to Yonkitt.

"What does he say?" inquired Knuckle, who began to feel a little uneasy at the stern, gloomy looks cast upon him and his young friends.

"Him say white men must go 'way!" answered Yonkitt.

"Go away? Where on 'arth are we to go to, at this time, in the winter? I sartinly didn't expect such treatment from the Skeemos."

"Him say *must go!*" repeated Yonkitt.

"Why, blast 'em! What has changed 'em so sudden like?" cried Knuckle. "May I be skinned for a walrus, if I don't b'lieve them Ribs has had somethin' to do with it!"

"Me t'ink so, too," said Yonkitt, "but Ayatak say not."

"It's an infarnal lie!" cried Knuckle. "The Injuns have threatened 'em, and if my suspicions is correct, they are going to give us up to them!"

"Me ask if not so, and they say no," remarked Yonkitt.

Meanwhile some of the Esquimaux were seen busily preparing one of the sledges, as if for a long journey. In fact the clattering of many tongues, with which was blended the yelping of the dogs, which were being harnessed to the sleigh, made such a din as the seamen had never before heard in the settlement.

It appeared as if a portion of the Esquimaux were expostulating with many of the others.

While this was going on, the sailors were closely hemmed in by Okotook and a number of his people.

"I think we'd better sheer off and make for our cave," whispered Knuckle to the boys.

They endeavored to push through the crowd, but the Esquimaux blocked the way.

"Come, give us sea-room there!" cried the old fourth mate.

"They not let us go," said Yonkitt. "They say getting sledge ready for us!"

"The sledge! What have we to do with that?"

"They say we must make long journey. Are going to send us to Russian settlement, where we find plenty friends."

"I don't believe 'em. They are going to give us up to them blasted Dog-ribs!"

As the old tar spoke many of the Esquimaux closed round them. They threw themselves upon them, hurled them down, and fastened their wrists and ankles with tough ropes of sealskin.

The sledge was now ready.

Ten dogs, strong and well-trained animals, had been harnessed to it by means of a tough line of sealskin, one bight of which was placed about the neck and another about each of the fore-legs. A thong leading over the back was fastened to the sledge to serve as a trace. One dog, larger than the others, was placed ahead as a leader.

The sleigh, about twelve feet long, was very low, with six or seven seats extending crossways, and the runners were curved and sharply pointed at the ends.

All the sailors except Yonkitt were now seized and thrust into the back part of the sleigh.

It was evident that some of the Esquimaux, among whom was the wife of Okotook, objected to the whites being taken off. These persons expostulated with the rest, but Ayatak said something to them in a loud, angry voice, which had the effect of silencing them.

A large, fat Esquimaux, whose name was Boolonok, now stepped upon the fore part of the sleigh, and seated himself with his legs hanging over one side of the vehicle. This was the driver, who held in his left hand a whip made of whalebone, about sixteen inches long, having a lash not less than thirty feet in length. Another man, provided with a spear and a long knife, also entered the sleigh, evidently to keep watch over Knuckle and his two young shipmates.

Soon after, a couple of Esquimaux appeared from behind one of the huts, carrying a small kajak, or boat, in which were a number of furs and sealskins.

"What, in the name of the etarnal codfish, is that for?" ejaculated Knuckle. "Are these chaps going to give us a sail in addition to t'other 'pleasures' they have in store for us?"

"Boat and skins for Injuns, me t'ink," said Yonkitt, who stood near the sleigh. "P'raps Injuns tell Esquimaux must give 'em a boat, as well as odder t'ings."

"Why, what infarnal cowards they are, to agree to sich tarms!" said Knuckle.

"Many Injuns and few Esquimaux," said Yonkitt. "If plenty Esquimaux, dem not afraid."

"You are perfectly welcome to stand up for your people, Yonkitt," said the fourth mate, "but I don't agree with you, for all that." The kajak was placed upon the back part of the sleigh, and was secured to one of the seats with thongs.

Then the driver, flourishing his long whip, but scarcely touching the dogs with it, uttered a few words which the intelligent animals seemed to understand at once, for they started off at a brisk trot.

"Ay, ay, here we are, off for 'kingdom come!" said Knuckle, as the sleigh glided smoothly and swiftly along over the hard crust of the frozen snow.

On went the vehicle, and soon the Esquimaux village was left far behind.

"That must be the Indian encampment," said Hasler, pointing far ahead, where a thin column of smoke rose in the air.

"Ay, ay, about five miles off," said Knuckle. "We will soon be prisoners among them infarnal Ribs!"

"Is there no way that we can escape?" said Nye. "It appears to me that our thongs are loosely tied."

"Ay, loosely enough; but it would puzzle an admiral to untie sich knots, especially as we have not the use of our hands to untie them," said Hasler.

The sleigh was now passing through a pine forest.

The cold wind whistled dolefully through the branches, which shook with a crackling sound.

As the sleigh finally emerged from the woods, the occupants could see the smoke of the Indian encampment, not more than two miles off. They also fancied they could discern a number of persons on a hill, near it, watching the approaching sleigh.

"Them are the Ribs, I think," said Knuckle. "The Lord help us, lads. I'm afeared we are in for it. It was a sorry day for us when we came on this coast!"

Just then the sleigh descended into a sort of hollow, which temporarily hid the smoke and the forms on the hill from the party.

The Esquimaux guard was at that moment conversing with the driver, while the three whites sat with their eyes carelessly turned on the kajak, which in the back part of the sleigh, almost touched them.

All at once Knuckle nudged Hasler's elbow.

"Lad," he whispered, "as true as there's bull-fish, I saw them skins move in that boat!"

Even as he spoke the skins lifted, and the head of Ingluk was thrust over the edge of the boat.

She lifted her hand in which was a knife, as a sign to the whites to make no noise. Then, lightly stepping from the kajak, she quickly cut with the knife the thongs which held the wrists and the ankles of the prisoners.

In an instant they sprung out of the sleigh which had now emerged from the hollow and was passing round the outer edge of a long line of rocks. Ingluk sprung after them, and, darting ahead, beckoned to them to follow her.

So rapidly and noiselessly was all this done, that the guard, who still had his back turned toward the rear of the sleigh, had not yet become aware of the escape.

The three liberated sailors followed Ingluk, who now took a direction parallel with the line of rocks. Soon after, she turned off toward the woods, on reaching which she ensconced herself behind a tree, and motioned to her companions to do the same.

Loud cries were heard in the direction the sleigh had taken, as if from the Esquimaux, who had just discovered that the whites were missing. These cries, however, were succeeded by whoops and yells.

"They are not the Skeemos!" said Knuckle. "They are the Injuns!"

Ingluk trembled from head to foot, and hid her face with both hands.

"Yes, they must be the Indians," said Nye. "Probably they came to meet the sleigh, and have discovered our escape!"

Again Ingluk started forward, fleeing over

the frozen snow with the speed of a deer. As the party ran on, they heard the yelping of the dogs attached to the sleigh.

Ingluk paused and listened.

"The sleigh is coming," said Hasler. "We will be overtaken!"

As he spoke the sleigh emerged to view from around the angle of the line of rocks. It contained but one of the Esquimaux, who, seated upright, appeared to be gazing straight ahead of him.

The girl again sped on. Soon, reaching a small hollow, over which lay a couple of fallen trees, she crouched there, beckoning to the whites to follow her example.

"What's the use?" said Knuckle; "that Skeemo must have sighted us, and he is steering straight for this latitude. It's only *one*, and I see no reason to be afeared of him."

But Ingluk made such animated gestures for him to crouch, that he and the boys complied.

Scarcely had they done so, when, emerging round the rocks, appeared half a dozen hideous savages, armed with spears, bows and arrows. They came to a halt, and, standing with their blankets streaming from their shoulders, they took a keen survey of the country before them. Then they moved along the base of the rocks, peering into the rifts and hollows.

"They are looking for us," said Nye.

"Ay, and if we stay here, I'm thinking they'll soon spy us out," said Knuckle.

As he spoke several of the Indians started forward, walking straight toward the hollow in which the fugitives were concealed.

"Give me your knife, lass," said the old tar, holding out his hand toward Ingluk. "Them infarnal Ribs sha'n't take us without some sort of a fight—leastways, without a few kicks!"

But Ingluk shook her head. Her gaze was fixed steadily and keenly upon the sleigh, which, rapidly approaching, was now within twenty yards of the hollow.

At the same moment there was a simultaneous yell from three Indians, as they raised their bows.

"It's all up with us—we are lost! They see us!" cried Hasler.

As he spoke three sharply-pointed arrows came whizzing between the trunks of the trees, striking the ground within a foot of the concealed party.

All the Indians now darted toward the hollow, running with a speed which the whites knew they could not equal, should they take to their heels.

Meanwhile there, too, was the sleigh, with its driver, darting toward the hollow with the speed of the wind.

"We are sartinly doomed," said the fourth mate, "doomed to be speared by them ugly critters, instead of dyin' a nat'ral death from drownin', or t'otherwise, and p'raps they'll skin us arterwards, for that matter!" added Knuckle, dolefully.

At this time the sleigh was within about thirty yards of the hollow.

To the surprise of Knuckle and the boys, the driver did not look toward it, but kept his gaze still fixed in front of him. The vehicle, if kept on its present course, must pass within several yards of the fugitives.

Ingluk, still watching the sleigh, suddenly sprang up, and, motioning to her companions to follow her, darted toward it.

Springing directly in its path, as it came, she shouted some words to the dogs, which, immediately slackening their pace, halted when close to the speaker.

A simultaneous cry escaped the sailors as they now looked at the driver.

Seated bolt upright, as already stated, the Esquimaux was silent and motionless, his features rigid, his eyes glazed and fixed.

HE WAS STONE DEAD!

CHAPTER X.

THE HUNTED SAILORS.

THE unfortunate driver had been killed by the Indians, who, with the barbarous cruelty peculiar to their race, had, after murdering him, by thrusting a spear through his body, arranged the weapon so that it would keep his form upright on the seat. In this position they inferred that the corpse would be carried by the dogs attached to the sleigh back to the encampment, and thus strike terror to the hearts of their enemies—the Esquimaux. Probably the Indians had not intended to permit the dogs to depart from them so soon. The animals had evidently broken from them and run off before they could stop them.

Ingluk motioning to her companions to imitate her example, now sprung into the sleigh.

Knuckle and the boys followed her, and seizing the reins, the girl shouted to the faithful dogs the word they knew so well, and which at once sent them off at a swift gallop.

Away went the sleigh amidst a shower of buzzing arrows, leaving the Indians following in the rear. The vehicle gliding over the snow at a wonderful rate of speed, the pursuing savages were soon so far behind that their arrows fell short.

"Well, now," said Knuckle, "this is what I call a neat little craft. Whales and flying-fish! but the lass has sartinly managed well, in gettin' us out of the breakers!"

"Ay, she is a good and noble girl," said Nye.

"A brave one, too!" said Hasler.

"She sartinly is," said Knuckle. "See how cool she is, standing there by the dead man, minding him no more than if he was a statuary of Capt'in Cook!"

Looking behind them, they now perceived that the Indians had halted. They had given up the pursuit and were holding a consultation.

Soon they were hidden from the view of the occupants of the sleigh by rocks, around which the vehicle had passed.

Ingluk drove on some distance further, when she suddenly stopped the dogs.

The whites could hear the murmuring of voices, and they knew that a party of the Esquimaux were approaching from their village.

The girl sprung from the sleigh, motioning her companions to follow.

She guided them to a mass of rocks and pointed to a hollow or small cavern, as an intimation for them to enter.

They did so, when Ingluk pushed down a piece of ice, overhanging the opening, thus partly closing the entrance.

The girl then left them, and, returning to the sleigh, drove on.

"Well, lads," said Knuckle, "here we are, and I s'pose it's for the best, though these are sartinly cold quarters, and we have nothing to eat."

"Ingluk will probably return and bring us a dinner," said Hasler.

"Ay, ay, we must wait for the lass, at any rate," said Knuckle. "It won't do to ventur' from our kennel until arter she comes, lest we git trapped again by the Skeemos."

As it was now past the middle of October, the days in this northerly clime were much shorter than they had been two months previous.

Night soon closed about the party, and the interior of the little cavern was very dark.

Suddenly the three heard a light step on the snow. The block of ice was pushed aside, and the form of Ingluk was descried. The girl brought the sailors some deer's meat and also some fur-skins, the latter of which would serve to make them warm and comfortable.

"How long do you expect us to stay here, lass?" queried Knuckle, forgetting that the girl cou'l not understand him.

She stepped aside and the head of a man was thrust through the entrance.

"Yonkitt, if I don't mistake," said Knuckle.

"Yes, me come with Ingluk."

"You are then at liberty?" said Nye.

"Yes; Ingluk take off ropes from feet and hands. Me come to be with you."

As he spoke, he entered the cave.

"And glad enough we are to see you," said Haster.

"Me glad you escape, too. Ingluk tell me all. But must keep berry close. Esquimaux no believe what Ingluk tell *dem*. Dey hunt for you; dey suspect you escape. Dey look now for you; must be close."

"Why do they not believe the girl?" said Hasler.

"One git on high rock to watch for sleigh. Him t'ink he see you in sleigh when it comin'."

"Tarry boodkins!" cried Knuckle, "that is sartinly bad."

"Dey hunt for you all night. In morning dey bury dead man—put in cairn. Den all have to go to see. Perhaps we can den get to cave in de Lookout Rock."

Ingluk placed the ice-block over the entrance of the hollow and departed.

The sailors then partook of their meal, after which they rolled themselves in the fur-skins.

They endeavored to keep awake, but as they had of late slept very little, they soon fell into a deep slumber.

Hasler was the first to open his eyes. He had been awakened by a yelping noise, and he now saw a pair of sharp, bright eyes glaring at him through the crevice between the ice-blocks and the top of the cave entrance.

He comprehended at once that one of the Esquimaux dogs had detected the hiding-place of the party.

He aroused his companions, who were already half-awake.

As he did so, steps were heard. There was the gleam of a torch, the ice-block was pushed aside, and the sailors beheld a dozen Esquimaux, with Okotook among them.

"Ay, that infarnal dog has betrayed us!" cried Knuckle.

The Esquimaux threw themselves upon the party and fastened their wrists with thongs. The prisoners were conducted to the village and placed in their tent, with men stationed around it to guard them.

"They'll send us back to the cursed Dog-ribs!" cried Knuckle.

"Nao," (No,) said Yonkitt; "dem too much 'fraid of Injuns, who been kill two men. Dem not send back."

"What will they do with us, then?" inquired Hasler.

"Don't know. Tink leave behind. Dey 'fraid of Injuns attack them; dey move to some odder place, 'way off."

"And will leave us to the mercy of their enemies?"

"Tink so."

Day dawned at last. A great commotion was heard in the village.

The sailors were led out of the tent. They saw men and women running to and fro, wailing and crying about the body of the murdered Esquimaux. The latter had been placed in a sitting position, with the face toward the sea. Not far from him stood Ayatak, the *angekok* (magic man) or chief of the tribe, apparently directing the movements of the mourners, for he would now and then extend his arms and speak to them in a loud voice.

Finally the men began to move round the corpse, each holding the other by the skirt of his bear or seal-skin robe, and patting the ground with his feet, at the same time uttering a dismal guttural chant, while the women collected by themselves kept time by giving a sort of up and down teetering motion to their bodies.

"Bless my eyes!" cried Knuckle. "It is sartinly a mournful spectacle, 'specially the dancin'!"

"Yes," said Yonkitt. "Call weepin' meetin'. Grieve much—berry heavy."

"Ay, ay, Yonkitt, with all due respect to your customs, it is a heavy consarn, seein' as your wimmen ain't particular light on their feet. But to be perlite, grief is grief, even in a sea-elephant, and I feel sorry for 'em all."

At last, at a signal from the *angekok*, the mourners stopped. Several of the Esquimaux raised the body, and with all the others following in procession, the prisoners being led along after the rest by their guard, they moved off to a spot where there was a small hollow in the ground. In this hollow the body was placed in a sitting posture, after which the hunting-spear, lance and knife, which had been used by the deceased when alive, were laid by his side. Then a heap of stones, which had previously been brought were piled up in a conical form about the hollow, until the body was completely inclosed. This ended the funeral, and all the people returned to the village, where instant preparations were made for departure.

While these were going on, the sailors were taken back to the rocky hollow, from which they had been brought to the village. They were made to enter the cavern, after which, their ankles were fastened with thongs, so that they were bound hand and foot.

"Dey going to leave us here. Say dey no want to kill. But dem leave us for Injun to find—dem Injun no go after Esquimaux," said Yonkitt.

"Eternal bullshif!" cried Knuckle. "I didn't think your people were so mean, Yonkitt."

"Nao. All not want us shut in cave. Say leave us free. But Okotook and Ayatak t'ink best leave dis way."

The Esquimaux departed, leaving the party seated, cold and hungry, in the hollow. Suddenly footsteps creaked on the snow.

Peering cautiously out, the whites beheld a large party of the fierce Dog-ribs moving along a short distance off in the direction where the village had been.

Fearing that they would be discovered, the sailors drew back and listened. At length footsteps were again heard, this time approaching.

"Here they come!" said Hasler, and the four expected every moment to see the savages enter.

The steps drew nearer; a form appeared!

It was not an enemy, it was the Esquimaux girl, Ingluk, who entered, and with her knife severed the lashings about the wrists and ankles of the party.

"Bless you, lass!" cried Knuckle. "You sartinly are our good angel, but I wish you had brought a chunk of meat with you!"

CHAPTER XI. UNDER THE ICE!

YONKITT spoke to the girl, and told the whites what she said.

She stated that, watching her opportunity, after her people left the village, she had contrived to elude the vigilance of her father, and glide off to the place where the sailors were confined. She had found no opportunity to bring them food, but she was determined to free them from the cavern.

Soon she detected approaching Indians, and had to conceal herself for some time ere she could continue on her way. At last she found a chance to reach the hollow. The Indians, she said, were scouring the country in search of the whites. The latter were not now safe anywhere on the coast.

As to her people, she stated that many of them objected to the bad treatment the sailors had lately received from Okotook, Ayatak and their partisans. The two Esquimaux who had put the canoe in the sleigh, at the time the whites were to be taken off to the Indians, had permitted Ingluk to conceal herself in the boat, and knew she was there when they placed it in the conveyance.

As the whalers had supposed was the case, the Dog-ribs, who had been to hold a parley with the Esquimaux, had threatened, unless the whites were brought to them, together with a present of a boat and some furs, to attack and slay all the people of the village. The sailors, they said, had shot one of their tribe, who had afterward died, and they were determined to avenge his death.

Ingluk added, in conclusion, that she would not go back to her people until she was sure the whites were safe.

"Where will you go now—to the Lookout Rock with us?" inquired Charley Nye.

When Yonkitt translated this to her, she looked at Nye, and tears rose in her eyes.

"No, she would not go there, but she would try to save *him*, or die in the attempt."

"I see; she will play the spy for us," said Hasler. "She will tell us when the Indians are about. What can make her so devoted to us?"

Knuckle winked, and nudged the youth in the ribs.

"Tarry Cupids!" he whispered. "Can't you guess? It's as plain to me as barnacles on a cow whale. That lass has fallen in love with Nye!"

"I had a suspicion of it once, but somehow I forgot it afterward," answered Hasler.

Apparently unconscious of the wistful looks Ingluk was still directing toward him, Nye took from his pocket a small diary, having a red morocco cover, and which, through all his trials, had thus far escaped injury, as he had kept it in a tight rubber case.

In this book the boy had jotted down notes of his adventures ever since leaving home. Now, as with his pencil he proceeded to sketch recent events, the eyes of Ingluk lighted up with admiration and something of wonder.

It was evident that the bright red cover of the book had pleased and excited the fancy of this simple child of the North.

"We are now in a perilous situation," wrote Nye. "Indians are searching for us. No sign of our ship yet. We have hardly provisions enough in our cave in the Lookout Rock to last us two days. The Indians will probably attack us there. If so, all our guns, except one, which is in the cave, having been taken from us by the Esquimaux, we will not be able to long defend ourselves with it and the few lances in the place, and will probably fall victims to the savages."

Just then Ingluk said something to Yonkitt, and pointed to the book.

"What does she say?" inquired Nye, as he looked up.

"She want to know what you make marks in the book for?" answered the Esquimaux.

The boy requested Yonkitt to tell the girl that he wrote in the book about everything that happened, which the native accordingly did.

Then, through the interpreter, Ingluk asked the American youth if he would not "put everything down" in his head, and give her that pretty book.

Charley laughed; then he frankly extended to her the diary.

"Yes," he said, "you can have it. If I ever get back to my ship I can remember these

things, and jot them down there; if I never do get back the book will be of no use to me."

The girl gave a cry of delight as she received the present.

The next moment she was gone.

"She has sartainly sheered off very suddenly," remarked Knuckle, "but I reckon we'll see her again before long."

The party soon after quitted the hollow, and sought that part of the coast where they had left their whale-boat, now intending to convey themselves by water to the place where they had formerly kept the craft, near the base of the Lookout Rock.

But they found the boat gone!

"Them Skeemos must have taken it with 'em," said Knuckle.

"Nao," said Yonkitt. "See! Injun take!"

As he spoke, he pointed to several bone beads, such as the Dog ribs wear for ornament, lying on the snow-covered beach, close to where the boat had been hidden.

"Ay, that proves it," said Knuckle. "We will have to foot it to the Lookout Rock. I'm sorry we've lost our boat, lads, as we might possibly have made use of it if cornered."

They moved off in the direction of the elevation, Yonkitt going ahead as a sort of scout, and keeping a sharp lookout for Indians.

The party finally reached their cave in safety. Some canned meat and sea-biscuits there made them a frugal meal. They found everything as they had left it, neither the Esquimaux nor Indians having discovered this retreat.

Knuckle carefully examined the only gun he had, and was glad to perceive that it was in good condition.

Then the party went outside, and screened carefully by a projecting rock, took a survey both of the country and of the sea.

Upon the latter there was now plenty of ice. Knuckle swept the tops of the drifting bergs with a keen gaze, but he saw no sign of a sail.

On land, however, something to attract attention was visible, for many dark forms were seen in the distance, approaching the elevation.

"Injuns!" said the old sailor. "They cannot be Skeemos—eh, Yonkitt?"

"No; him Injuns sure," was the answer.

The forms drew every moment nearer. All at once, however, they disappeared among a group of rocks about a mile off.

The party watched in vain for their reappearance.

"They come no further," said Nye, much relieved.

"Me t'ink Injun been see us when we climbing up dis rock—see us go up here," observed Yonkitt. "Dey know we are here."

The short day of a few hours finally passed. The night was dark—the moon was covered with clouds. After supper the party found that their provision was reduced to one day's supply. The weather was very cold. The water in a little bay near the base of the hight, was frozen over.

"Turn in, youngsters, and git some sleep," said Knuckle to the boys. "Yonkitt and I will keep the first watch."

The lads were glad to comply. Rolled in skins, they endeavored to keep warm, and soon fell into a deep slumber.

"Hark!" adjured Knuckle, an hour later: "it seems to me I heard a slight cracklin' of the snow beneath us."

"Me go and see what it is," and Yonkitt stealthily descended the hight. The moon still being hidden by clouds, the night was very dark, and Knuckle, peering after him, soon lost sight of his form.

The old tar waited impatiently for the Esquimaux's return. But the minutes went by and still Yonkitt did not come back. Knuckle began to feel uneasy. Taking his loaded gun, he cautiously commenced to descend the hight.

He had reached a platform of rock about twenty feet below the cave, when he stumbled over something.

Looking down, he dimly descried a human form lying stretched out with upturned face. The moon threw light enough upon the form to enable him to distinguish Yonkitt!

The young Esquimaux sailor-mate was dead. An arrow which had passed through his left eye into his brain, was still sticking there!

As the old tar looked about him, he was startled to see a fierce Dog-rib lying upon his breast across a rock a few feet above him, between him and the cave!

The Indian had fitted an arrow to his bow, and was about to draw the string which would

speed the deadly shaft upon its way. The arrow came whizzing upon its course, but Knuckle had seen it in time to stoop, and the missile passing over his head went rattling and scraping down the snow covered rocks.

In an instant, up rose the old tar, but ere he could raise his gun, the Indian, with a bound, dashed down upon him, aiming a long spear; but, alert and active as the savage himself, the old seaman struck the spear a savage blow with his gun that sent it spinning past him harmlessly.

Then the savage clutched him; there was a brief struggle, and the two rolled, or rather, slid, together to the base of the slippery elevation.

The fourth mate had contrived to retain his gun. He and the Indian sprung up simultaneously, the savage seizing the weapon near the stock, and endeavoring to wrench it from the old sailor's grasp.

Thus struggling, slipping along the hard snow, the two reached the verge of the frozen water of the bay.

Suddenly releasing his hold on the weapon, the tough old tar tripped the Indian, when down went the savage, falling backward, headlong, through a hole in the ice, close to the slippery bank, the gun flying from his hands as he went.

Knuckle hastily picked up the piece, then he looked down from the bank, to behold a horrid spectacle.

This was presented by the Dog-rib, who, there under the ice, brightly lighted by the moon, was making frantic efforts to save himself. For some minutes he kept leaping up in the water, under the frozen surface, throwing out his arms with the palms of his hands turned upward, and his hideously paint-streaked face magnified to twice its natural size, pressed against the inner side of the ice!

Gradually his movements became feeble, and soon, like some strange monster of the deep, he slowly sank out of sight.

CHAPTER XII.

AN ATTACK AND A DARING VENTURE.

KNUCKLE looked carefully around him. He doubted not that other savages were near; that the one whom he had encountered was merely a scout whom they had sent forward. In fact, as he looked, he beheld numerous dark forms advancing.

They had not yet seen him, but it was probable they would as soon as he mounted toward the cave.

As he sprang toward the base of the elevation, he was glad to see the moon again veiled by clouds.

He ascended the hight, and, reaching the cave, found the boys still fast asleep.

At first he hesitated as to whether he should wake them, but, finally, hearing the stealthy sound of approaching footsteps on the snow, he aroused both lads, and described to them what had happened.

"The infarnal 'Ribs' are coming," he added. "Each of you take a lance, and, if you have to throw 'em, mind you hold on tight to the warp; don't let it leave your hands, for, the Lord knows, we are short enough of weapons!"

Behind a breastwork of rocks, which they had erected near the entrance of the cave, and which commanded the only path which their enemies could ascend, the three placed themselves. They watched a long time before they saw any one coming.

All at once indistinct forms were seen, creeping stealthily, in single file, up the narrow path.

Knuckle waited until the foremost one was actually within a few feet of the breastwork ere he fired. The sharp report of the piece was followed by an unearthly yell, as the savage, springing up, fell back upon the one behind him.

The next moment the boys, hurling their lances, sent another of their foes sprawling upon the snow.

"Ay, ay, there's two gone to eternaty!" cried Knuckle.

Nye and Hasler pulled back their weapons by the warps attached to them, while the old sailor proceeded to reload his gun.

Several savages hurled their spears, but the stone breastwork prevented their enemies from being harmed by them.

By the time the fourth mate had reloaded his piece, not one of the Indians was to be seen. They had retreated, dragging with them the bodies of the two who had been killed.

"Hoaray!" shouted Hasler; "we have won an easy victory."

"Don't crow before the pot b'iles," said Knuckle; "we haven't seen the last of them Ribs yet!"

Keeping a vigilant lookout, the three remained at their post, but hours passed, and still there was no sign of the Indians.

A deep silence, broken only by the voices of the trio, reigned about the elevation. Knuckle ascended the rock behind the cave and looked about him.

It was still dark, but he could have seen the outlines of forms had there been any in the range of his vision.

All that night the three remained watching at their post.

At dawn they could see nothing of the Indians. The body of Yonkitt was gone. The savages had probably dragged it off to mutilate it, according to their custom.

The party made a light breakfast, for one can of preserved meat and a dozen sea-biscuits were all the provision they had left.

They ascended the rock, upon which they now planted their flag-staff by fastening it in a crevice, with the flag attached to it, at half-mast, as a signal of distress.

As yet there was no sign of a sail. Nothing was to be discovered seaward except masses and floes of drifting ice.

"The Lord have marcy on us!" said Knuckle.

"We are sartainly in a bad fix."

Two days passed, during which the three kept a vigilant watch.

But they saw neither their enemies nor any sign of a sail.

A few hours before this they had eaten their last biscuit but one!

They had not a morsel of food of any kind left.

"We can hunt for game," remarked Nye.

"In my opinion, the Indians have gone off."

"Not a bit of it, lad," said Knuckle. "Depend upon it, the rascals are lurkin' somewhere, not far off."

As the old tar spoke, a small seal was observed near the base of the hight.

The three eyed it wistfully, for, in their present hungry condition, they were not so scrupulous as formerly in the choice of food.

"We must have that fellow," said Hasler.

Knuckle scratched his head.

"One of us is enough to run the risk of going for it. You stay here, lads, and I'll go."

But before he had concluded, Hasler, lance in hand, was part way down the elevation.

Knuckle, his loaded gun in his hand, got upon a rocky platform, whence he could observe the movements of the youth and cover with his piece any enemy who should appear.

Reaching the base of the hight, Hasler, his lance uplifted, moved cautiously toward the seal.

When within darting distance, he hurled his lance, which passed through the body of the animal.

The latter, struggling a few moments, expired. Just as Hasler was about to withdraw his lance, the whizzing of half a dozen arrows was heard, and, from behind a rock, not fifty yards off, came as many savages, whooping and yelling!

One of the arrows passed through the young sailor's jacket—another just grazed his leg, a third pierced the fur cap he wore.

The base of the hight was about ten yards from his present position.

"Lively, lad, for the Lord's sake!" shouted Knuckle.

Securing his lance, Tom started on the run. As he gained the base of the hight one of the savages in pursuit, aimed another arrow with such unerring precision that it seemed as if it must pass through the body of the youth.

But, just then, there was a flash and a report, and the savage dropped dead, the half discharged arrow whizzing up into the air as he fell, pierced to the heart by a bullet from Knuckle's gun.

"Now, lad!" shouted the old tar, as he rapidly reloaded.

Hasler panting, ran up the hight. Nye and the old tar watched him anxiously. In a few minutes the fugitive would reach some projecting fragments of rock, which would serve to screen his person.

As if aware of this, his pursuers discharged another flight of arrows, and Tom was seen to drop upon one knee.

"God help him! the lad is hit!" shouted Knuckle.

But Hasler rose, and ran on at a limping gait with an arrow sticking in his thigh.

Yelling like fiends, the savages came on. Again Knuckle's gun roared—this time without effect.

He did not stop to reload, but dashed down the sloping path to the assistance of the youth. Nye at once leaping over the breastwork, followed, lance in hand.

Tom was now screened by the rocks. He hurried on, though with great difficulty. The foremost of the pursuing savages was about fifteen feet ahead of the others. As Hasler slackened his pace, dragging his wounded limb after him, the head savage gained a position close to him, and evidently bent on taking him alive, was about to seize him, when the youth turning, thrust his lance toward his body.

The savage avoided the stroke by a limber twist, and pulled the weapon from his adversary. The next moment his hand was upon the boy's collar, and he would have hurled him down the slippery descent into the midst of the other Indians, had not Tom clung firmly with both hands to the rock.

Perceiving he could not accomplish his purpose in time, as Nye and Knuckle were now only a few paces off, the native drew back the lance he had seized, and was about to pin the lad with it to the snow, when Knuckle flung his gun, stock foremost, at the man's head.

The thick skin cap of the savage having dropped off, the iron-bound stock of the piece struck the top of his skull with a force, which sent him sliding senseless down the frozen snow.

His body in the narrow path impeded the progress of the Indians below, and ere they could advance another step, the fourth mate had Tom by the hand.

The youth picked up the gun with the other, and gave it to the old tar.

An instant later Nye also arrived, and taking his friend's other hand, the two helped him swiftly along.

Meanwhile the savages continued the pursuit, but the projecting rocks screened the trio from the arrows which were discharged. Leaving Nye to keep on with Hasler, Knuckle reloaded his gun, but the savages did not wait to see the result.

They retreated down the path, and soon screened themselves behind a ledge of rocks near the base of the elevation.

A few minutes later the three were safely encircled behind the barricade, where Tom's wound was examined by his two companions.

It was found to be merely a flesh wound, the arrow having pierced it slantingly; nevertheless it was painful, and caused the youth much inconvenience.

Knuckle bandaged it with some canvas, and Hasler said he felt much relieved.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE LAST SHOT.

The short winter day passed in a couple of hours, and night again closed darkly around the three sailors.

Greatly did they regret that they had not been able to obtain the seal after it was killed.

Cold and hungry, they huddled behind the barricade, while Knuckle divided their last biscuit into three parts.

The old tar did not let them see his share until after they had eaten theirs, when they perceived that he had reserved for himself a smaller portion than he had given to either of them.

"Never mind," he said, "when they spoke of this. I've an old stomach, do you see, which doesn't need as much as younger ones. Why bless my eyes! I've seen the time when I've been without food for three days, and felt as lively as a cricket afterwards!"

"Come, Knuckle, that's a yarn. You don't expect us to swallow that," said Hasler, smiling to hide the pain of his wounded leg.

"I said *arterwards*," answered the old tar, "meaning arter I got something to eat!"

Hours later the fourth mate got upon the rock, and again looked seaward.

Suddenly he started. There was a light not two miles off! He could see it plainly.

His heart gave a bound. He felt sure that what he saw was a vessel's lantern.

The light remained in sight, apparently approaching land!

Nevertheless there was something about it that puzzled the old sailor.

It seemed to him that it oscillated rather more than was natural in so light a breeze and so small a swell as there must now be on the ocean.

Perhaps some person aboard the ship was waving it. Yes, such, he thought, must be the case; it was being waved as a signal to him and his young friends that their vessel was coming!

He sprung down and seized the boat-lantern, which he carried to the top of the rock, and

began to swing to and fro in response to the supposed signal.

Gradually the light out at sea disappeared. Knuckle divined the cause, for a thick fog had settled upon the water.

The old sailor resolved to say nothing to either of the boys, both of whom were now asleep, about what he had seen until the following morning, when the surprise would be all the pleasanter.

Soon after his discovery, he awoke Nye to take his turn on the look-out.

The lad was cold, hungry and miserable, but not a word of complaint escaped him.

The long night passed away at last.

The fog lifted; the tardy sun would soon rise, to remain only a few hours a short distance above the horizon.

Knuckle climbed to the top of the rock, and eagerly scanned the sea.

A cry of surprise and disappointment escaped him, for he saw no sign of any vessel—saw nothing but the water and masses of drifting ice! Nye and Hasler had also mounted the rock.

The three exchanged mournful glances.

"Things sartainly look bad for us," remarked the old sailor. "Here it is, past the middle of October, and no sign of our craft yet."

"The ice will soon become so thickly packed about the coast that our ship cannot reach us," said Nye.

"Ay, lad, she could hardly git within four miles of this part of the coast, now," answered Knuckle; "and—"

"Halloo! look there!" interrupted Hasler, joyfully.

He pointed toward a cove, among some rocks by the sea, where, sure enough, the three beheld what had at first escaped their attention—a whale-boat, in the stern of which was seated a sailor, wearing blue pants, a thick pea-jacket, and a round fur cap!

For some moments Knuckle said not a word. A broad smile, which seemed to expand his enormous mouth from ear to ear, lighted his visage. Then he took a bite from his plug of tobacco, and commenced to perform a sort of hornciping on top of the rock.

At last he stopped, and laid a hand on the shoulder of each of the lads.

"Well now, bless my eyes! I knowed that light I saw last night wasn't to go for nothing. Hooray! lads, hooray! I sartainly see heaps of pertaters, salt junk and hot coffee in prospect for us all!"

The man in the boat was seated with his back toward the spectators. Evidently he had been left in charge of the craft, while the crew went to search for Knuckle and his companions.

Suddenly Hasler looked serious.

"What if the rest of the crew have been massacred by the Indians?" he said.

"No, no! not a bit of it, lad!" cried Knuckle. "If sich was the case, don't you see, that man wouldn't be left there. Depend upon it, there's more boats somewhere along-shore, where we can't see 'em for the rocks. Captain Stone wouldn't have sent *only* one boat. You can feel sartin on that p'int!"

Then, clapping a hand to his mouth, the fourth mate shouted with all his might:

"Below, therel! Ahoy! ahoy, there! Where are the rest of 'em? Bring 'em all here! Here we are!"

The man turned quickly, and rose—the lapels of his fur cap nearly hiding his face.

He waved his arms as if for joy, pointed up the coast, and then beckoned to the party!

"Ay, ay," cried Knuckle to the lads. "I'll wager you that chap is Joe, the Portuguese! There's always something the matter with his voice so that he can't sing out."

"Yes, it looks like Joe," said Nye.

"Ay, and we'd better go down," continued the fourth mate. "I see how it is. The crews of the boats have chased the Indians away, and are somewhere along-shore. That's what Joe means by them motions of his!"

"Shall we take our arms along?" inquired Hasler.

"Ay, we may as well. Then there'll be all the less to fetch from the cave."

"But where is the ship?" said Nye, as the three started down the elevation.

"Away off behind some headlands, probably," said Knuckle. "Captain Stone didn't like to come where there was so much ice."

The three soon reached the base of the height, and hurried toward the boat, which was about twenty yards off. The ground here was free from rocks, so that it would not take but a minute to gain the boat.

When half-way there, it chanced that

Knuckle directed a glance behind him at the high they had left.

He said not a word, but over his face there came a singular expression. It was *one look of despair—a hopeless sort of look*, which, however, passed away in an instant! His gaze was again fixed upon the boat, and he steadily advanced.

Hasler limping, on account of his wounded leg, was on one side of him—Nye was on the other.

"Is that you, Joe?" called Nye to the man in the boat.

"Joe! Joe! Where are the others?" cried Hasler.

The man did not answer: he was stooping as if busy about something in the boat.

Knuckle did not speak. He rolled his quid rapidly, his eyes glittered in his little bullet head.

"He turned to Nye, and without a word, took the boy's lance from his hand, giving him his gun in exchange!

Both boys looked up at the old tar in surprise.

The three were now within six fathoms of the boat, its occupant still bending low, apparently busy arranging the whaling-line in the bottom.

Suddenly Knuckle paused, as quick as a flash he raised his lance, and sent it whizzing clean through the *body of the person in the boat*.

The man gave a yell, and rolled headlong over the gunwale of the craft into the water. At the same moment a hideous cry broke upon the air, and from a ledge of rocks, a few yards to the left of the boat, up rose half a dozen painted Dog-ribs, rushing toward the whites.

"To the boat, lads!" roared Knuckle, as he snatched his gun from Nye. "Lively, boys, lively!"

Nye and Hasler scrambled to the boat, and jumped into it; the old tar followed.

Both the boys now comprehended the truth—understood the snare that had been set for them by their wily foes.

The man whom Knuckle had speared lay with upturned face in the shallow water. The streaks of paint on his visage were plainly revealed; he was one of the Dog-ribs, and the garb he wore was that of the murdered Esquimaux sailor, Yonkitt! It is needless to add that the whale-boat was the one which had been stolen from the party by the savages. In it was the lantern—the same which Knuckle now comprehended had been waved on the night before, out at sea, by the Indians, in order to deceive him into the belief that sail was coming!

While the party were approaching the boat, it was the glance Knuckle had cast behind him that had first warned him of a snare, but he had seen dusky forms of Indians stealing up the hight to get possession of the cave and barricade! A keen inspection there had shown him that the trowsers worn by the man in the boat were turned inside out; he could also detect a streak of paint on one of his cheeks—facts which assured him that this person was one of his Indian foes.

"Down, lads, down!" shouted the fourth mate, as, with one blow of his knife, he severed the warp holding the boat to a rock.

The lads crouched in time to escape a shower of arrows, which flew whizzing over their heads.

Knuckle had pushed the craft away from the shore. Lying on his belly in the bow, he now pointed his gun toward the advancing savages, who at once threw themselves flat on the snow to avoid the expected shot.

"Paddle ahead!" ordered Knuckle.

He had but three rounds of ammunition left in the wallet swung over his shoulder, so he could not afford to waste it.

The boys, seizing paddles, sent the boat gliding swiftly away from the shore.

Screened by rocks, the Indians sent showers of arrows after them, but not one took effect, owing to the awkward positions of those who discharged them.

A fog soon hid land and water from sight. The party in the boat strove to avoid the ice, but their exertions were in vain. The light craft, caught in a floe, was carried landward with the drifting mass.

Knuckle stood up, peering keenly around him.

A lofty projecting point of land, extending into the water, was faintly seen looming up ahead.

"Ay, ay, there's the p'nt, about half a mile below the Lookout Rock," said the fourth mate. "We are driftin' down upon it with the tide."

"I hope there are no Indians there," said Nye.

"Them chaps have keen eyes. I'm afraid we'll find them waiting for us," said Knuckle.

In fact, as the boat was whirled still nearer the point by the floe, the three caught sight of the dusky forms of the Indians stealing among the rocks.

Scarcely had the edge of the floe struck the land, when the savages, springing upon the ice, were seen approaching the boat.

They had evidently resolved upon a bold rush, in spite of Knuckle's gun, and they came swiftly on, discharging their arrows as they advanced.

The three avoided the deadly shafts by lying low.

"The Lord help us, lads!" cried Knuckle, as he lay upon his belly and took aim with his gun, "the Lord help us, and may he be merciful enough to send every bullet home to the gizzard of them cursed 'Ribs'!"

The gun roared; one of the savages sprung up and fell flat upon his back.

With a yell the others rushed forward, striving to reach the party before Knuckle could reload. As the old tar rammed home, his up-raised arm was struck by an arrow and the limb dropped powerless by his side!

Nye sprang forward and took his place.

"God help you, lad; aim careful, don't waste your bullet!"

"Ay, ay," said Nye.

The sharp report of the piece rang out and another savage measured his length on the ice."

And now Nye rammed his last charge into the gun.

The yelling savages were within fifty yards of the boat as he took aim.

Carefully, coolly and steadily the brave boy, glancing his eye along the barrel, pointed the piece.

The crack of the gun smote the frosty air, another savage dropped—fell flat upon his face.

The others, with hideous cries of rage, came on. They would now have reached the boat before Nye could load, even had there been another charge left.

"It's all up with us!" cried Knuckle. "But there's lances in the boat! We may at least have the satisfaction of darting 'em before the 'Ribs' pin us with their spears!"

Each of the three picked up a lance. The Indians, less than twenty feet from the boat, had their spears raised, and in another moment a dozen of these ready weapons would have been hurled with unerring aim, when the roar of a volley of musketry was heard, followed by a ringing cheer, and down dropped more than half of the savage party, riddled with bullets!

At the same moment the sailors beheld four whale-boats, filled with armed men, emerge from the mist on their right, not thirty feet distant. They had evidently just rounded the point beyond which the overjoyed party beheld a welcome spectacle—their own ship, the *Beacon*, shooting out past the lofty headland, which had hitherto screened her from sight.

The remaining Indians turned and fled shoreward; in a few minutes not one was to be seen; the three whites were safe at last!

The boats which had come to their rescue were directed alongside the floe, and a girlish form sprung out with Captain Stone on the ice.

It was Ingluk who ran forward to the boat caught among the bergs.

She gave a cry of delight on seeing Nye; then she handed to him a little red-covered note-book he had given her.

"You may keep it," said the youth.

She understood the motion he made, although not his words. She blushed, trembled, and smiled joyfully as she replaced it in her pocket.

"To that girl," said Captain Stone, as he shook hands with the three occupants of the boat, "do you owe your rescue. She came to us two days ago, far away from here, in a little sealskin boat, and put in my hand the note book Nye had given her, which apprised me of your danger. She must have searched long for us, for she was half-starved and frozen when she reached the ship. But for her coming, I should have continued cruising before going to pick you up, as I found many whales where I was. I supposed you were comfortable and had plenty of provisions left."

"Ay, God bless the lass!" cried Knuckle. "What hardships she must have suffered, marching through ice and cold for the ship! She is a noble girl, and to her we sart'ly owe our lives!"

"I now understand why she wanted me to give her the note-book," added Nye. "She could not speak English, and she had learned from Yonkite what I put down in that book."

The crews went to work extricating the boat

from the ice, and in a short time the three rescued sailors were aboard the ship warming themselves by the fire and partaking of refreshments.

Knuckle's wound in the arm was not a serious one, but the ship's doctor said it would render him unfit for duty for several weeks. The surgeon also informed Hasler that his wounded leg would not long trouble him, now that he was where it could be properly dressed.

After he had finished his meal, Nye went on deck.

The men were now squaring away, as the ship was headed southward.

Ingluk stood by the rail; her sealskin boat was alongside.

She timidly advanced, and looked at Nye, her face slightly averted.

Then she held out both hands, and gently grasped his own.

The youth perceived that there were tears in her eyes, and he knew that she was bidding him farewell—that she was going away to seek her people.

"Good-by!" he said.

The girl retreated slowly to the rail there she paused a moment, looking back at the boy.

Then she descended into her little boat, and paddled off toward the mist along-shore.

As the ship dashed on, tossing the roaring waters and splintered ice from her bows, Nye watched the receding boat.

All at once he saw Ingluk stand up, take out the little red note-book, and kiss it.

Then she turned and waved her hand toward the vessel. The next moment the boat drifted out of sight in the fog, and this simple child of the North and the handsome American boy never met again!

In due time the *Beacon* arrived home. Charley made no more voyages to sea, but his kind chums, Tom Hasler and Nick Knuckle, visited him, years afterward, and informed him that, during their last voyage they had seen Ingluk, who had safely reached her people, after she bade a fast farewell to the youth, whose white-winged craft had borne him away from her sight forevermore!

THE END.

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